

HISTORY OF INDEPENDENCE

(AS WRITTEN IN MARCH 1878 FOR THE INDEPENDENCE NEWS)

This village was laid out on the Green Bay and Minneapolis Railroad six miles west of Whitehall on the 3rd day of June, 1876 by the Hon. D M Kelly of Green Bay WI. Previous to this there was an effort on the part of the residents of New City (on present day CR X) to have the depot located there, in which, of course, they failed. A bonus of \$5,000 was raised by subscription through the personal efforts of Markham Brothers, Giles Cripps and J C Noteman, to induce the railroad company to locate and build the depot here, which secured us one of the finest depot buildings on the road.

The first building erected after the depot was a residence and pool hall by David Garlick of New City . He purchased the lumber of Ira Smith, agent for W H White & Co, the pioneer lumber firm. Using Mr. smith's own words, he says "I commenced filling the bill when all the lumber I had in the yard would not have been enough for the roof boards." The next building was erected by G E Parsons after which there was a grand rush for real estate and buildings sprang into existence.

The last week in June, J W McKay purchased the lot where the Turnbull House now stands and built a shanty in which he commenced keeping boarders with the most flattering result. The following August he commenced building the Tremont House—now Turnbull House—which he sold last fall to Wm Lockwood. The house is now owned by Messers. Lockwood and Turnbull and run by Mr Turnbull, whose reputation as landlord needs no commendation at our hands. The hotel has been enlarged and otherwise improved since passing into the possession of the present proprietors.

The first store was built and opened to the public by Ed Elstad. He kept a stock of general merchandise and liquors of different kinds. Last summer he built a large store into which he moved his goods, the old building using as a liquor store. Mr. Elstad is a stirring businessman always on hand to assist in any enterprise that is for the public good.

Mr Lambert and Mr Larson soon after put in a store filled with a large stock of mixed goods. They also erected , in the same block as Mr Elstad, last summer. Mr Larson bought out Mr Lambert but a few weeks ago and associated with him M C Temmeraasen, a young man well spoken of: in fact, Mr Larson has done well in securing so capable a partner.

Michael Fugina, who in early times entered business in Fountain City, Buffalo County, but afterwards ran a store in New City. He was not long in making up his mind that Independence was just where he wanted to live, consequently he was long in moving up and making investments. He keeps a general assortment of dry goods, groceries, liquors, etc. and was the first man to pay two dollars a year in advance for the Independence News.

J C Taylor, formerly of Trempealeau, came some time in the fall of 1876 and built and opened a drug store , and by special election was elected Justice of the Peace. He at once entered upon the duties of his office and has continued to hold the office.

The wheat elevator was built in 1876 by Noah Comstock, Giles Cripps and J C Noteman, afterwards Mr Noteman failing to furnish his part of the capital was obliged to retire from the firm; since Messrs. Comstock and Cripps have run the business and they have advantages for handling grain second to none on the GB&MRR.

About January 1, 1877, building ceased for about two months when it was revived with vigor. During the month of May, following, some forty buildings were erected. In July, Ira Smith opened his Merchants Hotel and during the same month, S M Newton of Chippewa Falls, commenced building the Elk Flouring Mills which commenced manufacturing flour in January, 1878; this was the largest enterprise yet, for the actual benefit of the place, it being a No. 1 mill with six run of stone and latest improved machinery.

Listing of Businesses 1878

Dry goods-S A Steenowen Hardware-Milay & Danuser Ag Implements-John Sprecher

Groceries-D B Phelps Furniture- J W Runkle & Geo Shock Drugs- Taylor & Gates Harness Makers-H Lange & Bro Carpenters & Builders-Wm Cain & O P Clinton Millinery-Miss Anna Gorman

Blacksmith-C A Haetz & J H Ferdon Wagon Maker- G P Walker Lumber Yards-C N Paine & Co., Geo Hires and N D Comstock Boots & Shoes-N Theisen Musical Instruments- Wm Lockwood Butcher- Joe Ritzinger Physicians-V R Allison, Brandt & Lewis Jeweler-Ed Aver Livery-James Hanton, Wm Lockwood Express& Freight Agent-M E Trumer Elevator-Comstock & Cripps Hotels- W R Turnbull, Ira Smith, Levi Lantz, J Hoffer, Ernest Webster , H S Apetin

Boarding House-Mrs Dolan Saloons- Elstad Bros., O A Bullet, Levi Lantz, Michael Fugina, Frank Dickens, Peter Eichmann, E Walters, Melgard & Simenoor, Thos Sarry and Ola Aghasi