

Memories of Miller's Camp Stir With '08 Bridge Project

By Ryan Schlehuber

Memories of the former Miller's Camp in Cut River may be stirred next summer when traffic from US-2 is rerouted to Cut River Road to bypass a \$1 million rehabilitation project at Cut River Bridge. As it did years ago, traffic will once again pass by the site of the former restaurant, gas station, and rental cabin business, originally owned by Frank and Opha Miller.

The business flourished at the Cut River in the early 1900s, when vehicles passed along the only route to Trout Lake, by connecting with Hiawatha Trail.

When Mr. and Mrs. Miller died, the business was passed on to the Millers' daughter, Ida, and her daughter, Bertine, who married Milford Fenner. Together, the three continued the business.

There were three small cabins for rent at the Cut River site. In 1942, fire destroyed all but the main lodge and a small building that was the gas station, said Darlene Fenner, wife of the late Richard Fenner, who was the grandson of Ida Miller.

She remembers family trips to Miller's Camp when she was a child.

"My mother had three sisters who married three brothers, and they all lived in Trout Lake," she said. "It was a monthly excursion

on Sunday to visit them, with a stop at Miller's Camp at Cut River to feed the caged bears with bottles of orange pop."

The unpaved roads were quite dusty, she recalled.

"When you met a car [passing on the road], all the windows got rolled up so we wouldn't choke on the dust," she said.

Cut River Road was part of the main highway until the state highway department rerouted US-2 in 1947, creating a strip of road that redirected traffic just past the U-shaped road. The project included the construction of the Cut River Bridge over the Cut River gorge.

"Several people were killed on the windy road with a small bridge over the river," she said. "My husband remembered going to the scene of an accident on the bridge where a railing went through the windshield and decapitated the passenger. So the new bridge was built to the south and a new highway



Miller's Camp at Cut River included a small gas station, a lodge, three rental cabins, and a restaurant on Cut River Road, which used to be the main highway between Epoufette and Brevort. (Photographs courtesy of Darlene Fenner)



Frank and Opha Miller sitting in their restaurant, circa 1947. Mr. Miller was originally from Battle Creek.

bypassed the Cut River site of Miller's Camp."

The lodge at Cut River was sold sometime in the 1970s, and was then used to house and feed men working on the construction of the nearby pipeline. It was also used as lodging for deer hunters in the fall and for recreational snowmobilers in the winter, a practice that continues today.

The new road allowed drivers to drive straight between the village of Brevort and Epoufette. Unfortunately, Mrs. Fenner said, it also steered potential customers away from Miller's Camp.

Instead of folding, Ida Miller and Bertine and Richard Fenner relocated their business on West US-2 two miles outside of St. Ignace.

Mrs. Fenner has heard the myth of Miller's Camp being moved to its new location by horse and dray, but none of the original building materials were moved from Cut River, she said, "as romantic as that sounds."

The new Miller's Camp, which featured a bar and restaurant, and later, a dining room, was built by Milford and Richard Fenner and "whoever else they could recruit," said Mrs. Fenner.

"Milford had many friends in the Battle Creek area, where he was originally from, who came to help," she added.

The relocated business was easy to spot from the road, as the Millers displayed a large "M" sign as



In 1947, after US-2 was rerouted away from Cut River Road, Miller's Camp was rebuilt two miles outside of St. Ignace on US-2, across from the St. Ignace golf course. It included a restaurant and bar when it was first built. Later, a dining room was added.

advertisement. It was designed by Blaine Wing and Mrs. Fenner's brother, Harold Glashaw, both former business owners in St. Ignace.

"When I was dating Richard in high school, I remember the parking lot wasn't paved yet," said Mrs. Fenner. "With the spring rains, it was very muddy and, one time, he tried to carry me from the car, but stepped in a hole. We both fell in the mud, ruining my beautiful new gold-colored coat, and embarrassing him to no end!"

Paul and Peggy Binger purchased the establishment from the Fenner family shortly after they moved to St. Ignace in 1971. The

Bingers kept the business name.

Miller's Camp changed owners again when Tom and Gelina Weldy bought it. The Weldys sold the

building, along with a family home, last year to Tim and Diane Lee, who reopened the business as Timmy Lee's Pub in January.

Brevort Resort Transforms Into Weekend Flea Market

A former six-cabin resort in Brevort has been transformed into shops with ever-changing, flea-market-style tables under tents, where area residents and traveling salespeople are selling new and used goods.

The summer business, called The Village Marketplace, is across from the Whitetail Resort on US-2. It is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday through Sunday. It was started this summer by Yvonne and Dale St. Andre of Naubinway and Ortonville. The couple moved away 35 years ago and are now summer residents.

Several old cabins have been converted into shops, one for antiques, another for candles, a third for used furniture, clothing, and Native American crafts, including beadwork, Mrs. St. Andre said.

One of the buildings carries new goods, such as Badger skin care products, Watkins baking and cooking products, and new prints, frames, and used goods. Another shop contains items associated with the outdoors, such as used fishing and camping equipment, in addition to household decorations, books, and stained glass works.

Elsewhere at the market, home-

made pies, turnovers, bread, and cookies from a licensed local vender are for sale.

Mrs. St. Andre said others are welcome to sell their used items at the outlet. If interested, call her at (906) 477-1193.

DeTour Industrial Park To Get \$25K

The Village of DeTour will receive a \$25,000 grant, which will contribute toward establishment of an industrial park in the village. Congressman Bart Stupak announced the grant, Tuesday, June 26, saying it would help strengthen the area's economy.

"The creation of the industrial park has been an ongoing project for the Village of DeTour," Mr. Stupak noted. "This grant will help offset engineering costs related to the business park. Creation of an industrial park in DeTour Village will spur economic growth in the area and expand the community's tax base."

The industrial park being built is expected to consist of more than 33 acres of space for new businesses. In the immediate term, the grant is expected to assist three businesses and create 12 jobs.

Bayside LIVE!
Entertainment Series
7:00 p.m. - Thursday, July 19
Blue Water Ramblers
7:00 p.m. - Thursday, July 26
Pub Runners
Downtown St. Ignace Municipal Marina
FREE ADMISSION
LOCALS ON THE BAY
7:00 p.m. - Wednesday, July 25
Crazy Moose
Bayside Live! Brought to you through the generosity of:
The City of St. Ignace, First National Bank of St. Ignace, St. Ignace Downtown Development Authority, St. Ignace Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club of St. Ignace, St. Ignace Visitors Bureau

ATTENTION ATTENTION ATTENTION
Sault Ste. Marie
Tribe of Chippewa Indians
UNIT THREE MEETING
Wednesday, July 25, 2007
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
McCann School, St. Ignace
Please contact Lona Stewart with any questions
Office: (906) 635-6050 ext. 26332
Email: lstewart@saulttribe.net

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Under the watchful instruction of professional boat builder Mike Kiefer, visitors will have the opportunity to observe or participate hands-on in the lofting and construction of this classic northern Michigan boat.
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Les Cheneaux Historical Association presents
"Searching for and Remembering Family"
A Presentation by Cathy Hollowell
Tuesday, July 24, 7 p.m.
at the *Les Cheneaux Historical Museum*



Hope

This is Relay For Life, a community event where people come together to remember loved ones, inspire others, and celebrate life. It's your chance to make a difference in the fight against cancer. The money you raise will fund research, education, advocacy, and service programs. Call us to register your team for this unforgettable event. This is the American Cancer Society.
Mackinac County Relay for Life
Friday & Saturday,
July 27th & 28th
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A HEARTFELT THANKS TO ALL THE SPONSORS OF THE SECOND ANNUAL VENETIAN LIGHTED BOAT PARADE AND COSTUME PARTY HELD ON THE EVENING OF JULY 7th. YOUR SUPPORT HELPED MAKE THE EVENT A SUCCESS AND WAS GREATLY APPRECIATED.

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