

PETOSKEY HANDLE WORKS 1879
{manufacture of broom & mop handles, croquet sets, wooden bowls, etc.}

**Situated on East Side of Bear Creek
Petoskey, Emmet County, Michigan**

PETOSKEY HANDLE WORKS

Petoskey Secures Them, And is Happy Operations To Commence Immediately

Petoskey City Record
Thursday, January 2, 1879

It is with pleasure that we are able to announce, that the scheme which has been pending since early in November, whereby a factory for the manufacture of handles of every description, principally broom and mop, croquet sets, wooden bowls, etc., was to be established at Petoskey, has at last culminated in a satisfactory arrangement, and the immediate commencement of operations secured beyond the possibility of a doubt.

THE SITE

Selected is on the east bank of Bear Creek, being the water privilege of Shaw & McMillan, and comprises about two acres, with the use of four hundred inches of water. Eight hundred dollars is the purchase price, Shaw & McMillan contributing \$100 each, and the balance, \$600, to be subscribed by the citizens of Petoskey, while Forbes & Baker bind themselves to employ at least 10 hands the first year, and 15 hands the remaining four years. Upon their compliance with such conditions they are to receive a deed at the end of five years.

Mr. McMillan received a dispatch last evening, stating that the land with these conditions had been accepted by Messrs. Forbes & Baker, and authorizing him to draw up the contract for the same. Mr. Shaw also informs Mr. McMillan that both these gentlemen will arrive at Petoskey sometime next week, with a Turbine water wheel, saw mill, lathes, and all the machinery requisite for prosecuting their business. Having large orders ahead, which they cannot fill at Kalamazoo, they will lose not time, but proceed immediately to the erection of a saw mill, and thereafter the factory proper. They expect to complete their works within six weeks from the time the initiative blow is struck, and upon the completion of the same, will immediately put at work a force of fifteen men, running night and day, which will be equivalent to thirty men employed, providing they can obtain logs fast enough.

A BRIEF HISTORY

The Kalamazoo Handle Factory, of which this firm is an offshoot, came from Rockford, Ill., where they had been previously operating, as a clothespin factory, exclusively, and established themselves at Kalamazoo. The company afterwards added-handle machinery, and machinery for turning croquet sets. As suitable timber in the immediate vicinity of Kalamazoo, has become somewhat scarce, and orders, principally for handles, are constantly pouring in, a portion of the company have wisely shifted their quarters to a point where the raw material is simply inexhaustible, and which presents admirable facilities for shipment either by water or rail, i.e., Petoskey. Nearly the entire amount required from our citizens has been raised, and with the energetic departure taken by Messrs. Forbes and Baker in the matter, the balance will soon be forthcoming.

MR. BAKER

Will soon remove his family here, and Mr. Forbes' family will arrive and locate in the spring.

The importance of this enterprise to our town and the surrounding country will be incalculable. The receipts arising from the products of the factory will, to a great extent, be expended in our midst. Many of our homesteaders, who, every year, on the approach of winter, have reluctantly been compelled to seek other fields of labor, will now find constant and remunerative employment, while thousands of stately trees which have heretofore been cremated in log heaps, will now be cut into logs and transferred to the "*Petoskey Handle Works*," from whence they will emerge manufactured into handles, with which to further the ends of industry wherever they may be needed. The interests of the company are most assuredly our interests, and we hope no man in this community will be backward in aiding to the extent of his ability in placing this enterprise on a sure and firm foundation.

THE PETOSKEY HANDLE FACTORY

Petoskey City Record
Friday, January 3, 1879

THE HANDLE FACTORY

During the past four years there has been many attempts to get something to utilize the water power in this town in the way of manufacturing, which have been only partially successful, only a planing, saw and grist mills have as yet been secured. We took hold of this matter with a will about four weeks ago, and determined, if in our power, to secure this institution, and we take pride in saying that it has been brought to a successful issue, the contract has been made for the power, and arrangements are being made to ship the necessary machinery, and, weather permitting, work will be commenced at once upon the buildings, and only a short time will intervene until we shall see their wares seeking other markets, money being brought into our town there for. We hope to be able in a short time to give the price which will be paid for logs delivered, and also wages to be paid for operatives.



The Petoskey Record
Thursday, January 16, 1879

The timbers for the handle factory are being sawed at McManus & Kilborn's mill. The building is to be 22X50 feet, and two stories in height, and will for the present be used for the manufacture of handles exclusively, with a view to filling the huge orders already in.



Emmet County Democrat
January 24, 1879

Messrs. Forbes & Baker are at work as rapidly as the weather will permit putting up their handle factory. They will make the building sixty feet long instead of fifty, as first intended.



Emmet County Democrat
Friday, January 31, 1879

Work has begun on the Petoskey Handle Factory. The next alternate will be another Whiskey Factory.
Charlevoix Sentenuel.....Sour Grapes

The Petoskey Record
Thursday, January 23, 1879

THE HANDLE FACTORY

Last evening Messrs. C. Forbes and Lucius Baker with their families, left town for Petoskey, which is to be their home. Messrs. Forbes and Baker have secured an ample water power on Bear Creek, and will at the earliest practicable moment erect buildings for their factories for making handles and all kinds of turned work. The outlook for business is excellent, and success seems to be assured. We heartily commend these gentlemen to the people of Petoskey and predict for them a cordial reception, and feel sure that fortune will smile upon the enterprise. Kalamazoo people will be glad to hear from Messrs. F. and B., and learn that their lines have been cast in a pleasant place.

We copy the above from the *Kalamazoo Telegraph*. These gentleman have resided at Kalamazoo for several years, where they have been engaged in manufacturing, and we are glad to welcome them in our midst, knowing that their enterprise will be of infinite benefit to Petoskey and the surrounding country. We hope that their success in business will be commensurate with the faith and energy they have exhibited in overcoming the numerous obstacles they have been compelled to contend with in establishing their works here at this most unfavorable season of the year.

The raising of the factory will be completed to-day, and as most of the building material is either on the ground, or conveniently accessible, and as the work will be vigorously pushed, we hope to be able to chronicle their entire readiness to commence the turning out of handles in the course of two or three weeks from date. Maple, at the onset, will be the main timber handled, although thorough experimenting will be had in Birch, or any other timber which promises to become available in their business.

PETOSKEY HANDLE FACTORY

Emmet County Democrat
Friday, June 22, 1883

HANDLE FACTORY BURNED

About half-past five on Tuesday morning last the handle factory of C. Forbes was discovered on fire, and ere long it was entirely destroyed, together with nearly his entire stock of finished and unfinished handles, rolling pins, etc. The origin of the fire is only a matter of conjecture, as when discovered a door was seen to be open, and just before this drunken Indians were seen coming from the direction of the factory, and it is supposed that they broke open the door, which was not fastened very securely, and slept in the shavings during the night, and when about to depart in the morning probably lighted their pipes, paying no attention to where the match was thrown. The loss is about \$4,000, covered by \$1,500 of insurance.

By this fire several men are thrown out of employment, and Mr. Forbes tells us that he is not certain as to his rebuilding again. We hope that someone will rebuild the same, as this village can ill afford to lose any of its manufacturing interests.

{Democrat}



Emmet County Democrat
Friday, June 22, 1883

A CARD OF THANKS

I wish to express my thanks to the fire company and the many citizens who so willingly lent their aid, at the burning of my factory Tuesday morning.

C. Forbes

HANKEY LUMBER COMPANY

Purchased in 1946 by Louis Hankey Sr.

HANKEY LUMBER BUILDING – TO Be DEMOLISHED

Petoskey News-Review
Friday, July 13, 2012

Building to be demolished

Jonathan Alexander

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The large brown Hankey Lumber Co. building, that has stood at 900 Emmet St. in Petoskey for as long as anyone can remember will no longer be in existence soon.

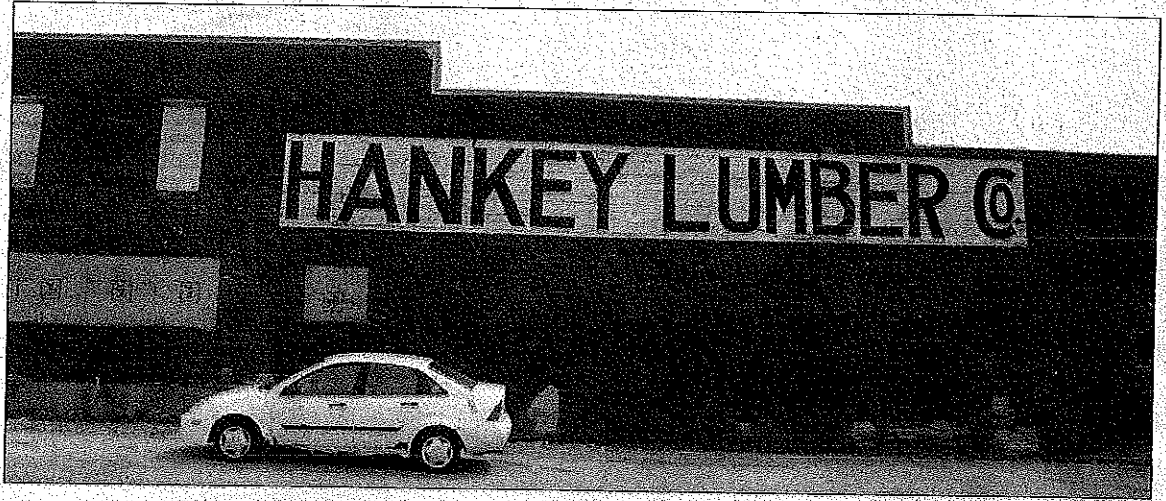
Al Gruler, owner of Gruler's Farm Supply, who currently owns the run-down building, said the city was getting complaints because the building was getting dilapidated.

"They thought it was an eyesore," Gruler said.

Petoskey city manager Dan Ralley said the building hadn't been used in years so there were concerns on whether the building was secure.

"Because it wasn't being heavily used, animals were getting into the building and maintenance was a concern," Ralley said.

Gruler seemed a little disap-



JONATHAN ALEXANDER/NEWS REVIEW

The Hankey Lumber Co. building on Emmet Street in Petoskey will be torn down.

pointed that the building must be torn down, but realizes that a change is necessary. The building was never built to grade and the floors do not lie flat. Rather the floors slope away, Gruler

said.

"Just looking at the building today, it would be difficult to bring that building up to modern standard," Ralley said.

Kate Scollin, human resour-

ces and marketing manager of Preston Feather Building Centers, was employed with Preston Feather when it owned Han-

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key Lumber Company. Preston Feather owned the business from 1986-2006.

She also says that the building was in bad shape.

"Because it was so old and used several times, it was a crazy place to work," Scollin said. "Our drivers and shipping personnel had to be a little more careful because the floors were uneven. It was quaint, historic, and inefficient."

However she is also one who doesn't want to see the building go.

"It's sad because it is a historic building and it's the end of an era," Scollin said.

"This whole area was dotted with small lumberyards all over the place."

Gruler says that he will build a new building similar to the one he owns in Charlevoix, which he will be selling soon. When the building in Charlevoix is sold and the Hankey Lumber is knocked down, construction on the new building will take place.

Louis W. Hankey Jr. says it was one of the biggest parcels in the city when his father, Louis Hankey Sr. owned the building.

"My dad bought it after he got out of the war (World War II) in 1946," Hankey Jr. said. "It was a lumber yard before he bought it."

He bought the lumber yard from Desert & Brown Lumber Co. Steve LaVictor remembers his time there from 1971-1984 working under Hankey Sr.

"There was probably 8-10 people that worked there," LaVictor said. "It was well run for the time period, vibrant and always busy." He describes how Hankey Sr. would come in everyday, and how they would use railcars for inventory.

The Hankey Lumber Co. dealt with contractors who built homes. They would carry all the lumber to the site, which would include the outside and the roofing.

"It was very useful in its time but I guess it outlived its usefulness," LaVictor said.

During the winter, Hankey Sr. would go to Florida and turn the management over to Robert Ford. Ford worked for Hankey Sr. for 49 years until 1995.

Ford, 85, is unsure of when the building was built, but says it was before his time.

"It's a shame to see it torn down but what can you do with it," Ford said. "It is old and worn down."

Demolition date is uncertain, but Gruler says it will probably be within the next couple of weeks.