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EVELETH, MINNESOTA

EVELETH (1,574 alt., 6,071 pop.). The "Hill Top City" was named for Erwin Eveleth, a lumberman here from Michigan who had been sent to purchase pine lands in the region.

In 1892, with the discovery of iron ore in the region, a town site was platted and incorporated about a mile southwest of the present location, on land now included in the Adams-Spruce Mine (Douglas Avenue - between Jones and Monroe Streets). Unfortunately, the disastrous financial panic of that year almost coincided with the founding, and the tiny settlement was hard-pressed to survive. No new buildings were added to the four or five that formed the nucleus, and at times food was so scarce that residents were reported to have existed solely on moose meat. Mail service at this time was practically discontinued; the only letters to arrive came by way of Virginia on dog sleds.

The first council meeting was held in the back room of a store on October 25, 1894. The village hall, built a year later, was a two-story frame building that cost \$659.69. The first school, a frame shack, was opened in 1895, with Florence Kent as the first teacher.

In 1895 ore was discovered beneath the town site, and five years later the village was moved to its present location. Men of all nationalities worked side by side in the mines. From 1900 to 1910 the population increased from 2,752 to 7,036.

The community was incorporated as a city in 1902. It is a city of the fourth class operating under a home rule charter. When a new cemetery became a necessity, the problem was where to locate it, for valuable ore might turn up almost anywhere. While the city fathers had no compunction in moving houses of the living, they did object to disturbing the resting places of the dead. Finally, after exhaustive experiments proved that a certain section had no potential mineral wealth, it was designated as a graveyard and thus far no other annoying conflict between sentiment and riches has arisen.

Mining was Eveleth's chief industry for many years. The open-pit method was the favored process here. Visitors can still view the colorful man-made excavations, from whose depths millions of tons of iron ore have been taken and hauled by rail to Duluth sixty miles away. The Adams-Spruce Mine, a combination of seven properties, was operated by both under-ground and open-pit methods. The Leonidas Mine, the deepest underground mine in the world, had reached a depth of over 650 feet. Today with the development of low grade ore called taconite, mining is again Eveleth's chief industry.

Among the city's outstanding public buildings is the City Hall, erected in 1906 and remodeled in 1921 at a cost of \$50,000. Eveleth has six schools, a senior high school and junior high school, two elementary grade schools and a manual training school erected in 1914, the first in the State of Minnesota devoted entirely to boys' shop work. On September 30, 1963, the manual training building opened its doors for the first time as the Eveleth Area Vocational School where printing, office education, optical technology, automotive service, welding, photo-lithography and graphic arts are taught. The public library, having more than 22,500 volumes, is one of the most modern and complete in the Arrowhead. The Recreational Building was the first of its kind on the Mesabi Range with skating and curling areas. The building was later remodeled and has become the home of Cluett, Peabody & Co., manufacturers of Arrow shirts and shorts. The Eveleth City Auditorium, another of Eveleth's fine buildings, has been converted into an Arrow Pajama factory. The Hippodrome, remodeled at a cost of approximately \$160,000 is probably the only one of its kind in Minnesota. This building is used as a hockey arena, with artificial ice, the main sheet of ice measuring 190 ft. x 85 ft. Its seating capacity is 3,000. It is also used for basketball tournaments and curling bonspiels. The Eveleth Fitzgerald Community Hospital, a 50-bed hospital, was opened in 1959, financed through the efforts of its citizens. It won an "Outstanding Hospital Award" in June of 1960.

Eveleth also has a Farmers' Market which is open each summer from May through September, and is the only one of its kind in the area where farmers bring their fresh produce, dairy products and fresh vegetables to sell to the public. The Market has been popular for many years and the public from the entire area eagerly awaits its opening.

Eveleth is known as the "Hockey Capital of the Nation" and has produced such hockey greats as Ching Johnson, Frank Brimsek, John Mariucci and Mike Karakas. The Eveleth High School has taken many state and national honors annually in hockey. Down through the years since the first Eveleth High School team was organized in 1921, the high school team has enjoyed a measure of success that is so outstanding that national publications have had many articles paying tribute to the Eveleth teams and their coaches. The high school team has had two long record runs of undefeated seasons, one of 58 games and one of 78 continuous victories over a period of four years. Not too long ago, John Mayasich, an Evelethian, was a mainstay on the champion Olympic hockey team. Eveleth was recently designated by the American Hockey Association of the United States as the site for the National Hockey Hall of Fame and Museum, honoring both amateur and professional players, as well as the builders of the sport, with emphasis on the American-born. Plans for construction of the museum and hall are being formulated at the present time.

Eveleth is also known as the "Friendliest City on the Iron Range" and never allows a stranger within its gates to remain a stranger long!!