

North Dakota State University

Fargo ND 58105-5075

701-799-2942

isern@plainsfolk.com

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Kenneth Habiger
626 Front St
Casselton, ND 58012-3300

Dear Mr. Habiger:

I read in the *Forum* that there will be a meeting tomorrow night to discuss the fate of the Can Pile. I regret that university duties will prevent my attendance; otherwise, I would be there, because I would like to offer encouragement and assistance in the preservation of this historic landmark.

There are two reasons I would argue for preserving the Can Pile: respect for the past, and concern for the future.

I do not use the term “historic” lightly. The Can Pile is significant locally to the community of Casselton; regionally to the saga of Highway 10; and nationally as a classic example of roadside Americana. The site already is well-known across the country because of being featured in popular websites and publications. In my professional opinion, however, the Can Pile is not only a popular feature; it is also historic and significant. Its demolition would be an act of disrespect for the community, the region, and the nation.

Further, such demolition would rob the community, and its children, of a valuable heritage resource for the future. Preserved, interpreted, and publicized, the Can Pile will serve as an attraction for Casselton and a source of pride for North Dakota in generations to come. You know the old saying, “If you build it, they will come.” Well, in this case, if you preserve it, interpret it, and publicize it, they will come, and we will profit thereby. The Can Pile is a valuable, bankable resource for heritage tourism.

I know nothing of the technical aspects of moving the structure. (I would encourage that it not be moved far, and that it remain alongside Old 10, else its integrity will be lost with loss of context.) I do know a few things about interpreting and publicizing a site such as this, and I also have an idea or two as to sources of financial assistance.

If I may be of assistance to your preservation efforts, do get in touch with me. I wish you all success.

Sincerely,



Tom Isern, Professor of History
Director, Center for Heritage Renewal
Dale Hogoboom Presidential Professor
University Distinguished Professor

cc: Kurt Bollman, President, Loegering Manufacturing, 15514 37th St SE, Casselton ND 58012-9751