DICKINSON COUNTY HISTORY -– FORD MOTOR COMPANY – PRELUDE TO FORD MOTOR COMPANY

[By William John Cummings]

Within a ten-year span – one decade – Iron Mountain and Dickinson County were presented with two economic opportunities which heavily impacted on the development of the area. One Dickinson County citizen was destined to play a significant role in both of these opportunities.

On Friday evening, March 11, 1910, Godfrey von Platen, a lumber capitalist from Boyne City, Michigan, and his manager, Merton J. Fox, attended a meeting in the Elks Lodge clubrooms, called at Mr. von Platen's request, to speak to about fifty businessmen about a proposal he wished to make to the residents of Iron Mountain.

Von Platen wanted to locate a large band-saw mill here, but in order to successfully "float the enterprise" it was necessary to secure concessions from several railroads in terms of freight rates on logs and lumber. If favorable rates could be secured, he would build the mill and equip it for a run of not less than twenty-five years. The mill would be equipped with two band saws and would employ nearly eighty men, running winter and summer. Von Platen and his associates owned large tracts of hardwood timber along the Chicago & North-Western Railroad and were interested in securing other hardwood tracts along the St. Paul and Wisconsin & Michigan roads.

Von Platen asked no concessions from the people of Iron Mountain in the way of taxation or a bonus. All he wanted was the people's assistance in securing the desired freight rates and some temporary help in closing the deal for the site.

The site was a 160-acre farm to the south of the city, today the site of the Oscar G. Johnson Veterans Affairs Medical Center. The land was admirably located for a manufacturing plant, as the three railroads tapped the property – the North-Western on the east and the St. Paul on the west – while the Wisconsin & Michigan tracks passed directly through the farm. Von Platen had a 30-day option to purchase the farm – which included two residences and other buildings – for $20,000. The buildings alone were worth fully half of this purchase price.

Von Platen only needed 40 acres. He proposed that the people of Iron Mountain form a Commercial Association and purchase the farm at the $20,000 asking price. The Association would then sell Mr. von Platen the forty acres he needed, for which he agreed to pay $6,000. He would also purchase the buildings, provided they were reasonably priced. In addition, he asked for a two-year option on the remaining land which he contemplated selling to some capitalists proposing to build a blast furnace and a chemical works on the site.

This proposition meant that the people of Iron Mountain, in order to secure industries potentially employing between three and four hundred men, would invest – for a period of not more than two years – about $12,000. If the chemical works and furnace were not constructed, the subscribers would be the owners of a tract of nearly 120 acres of farm lands located within the city limits for which they would have paid $12,000. The land could be subdivided into small farms or city lots and sold for more than $12,000. Some thought one forty could be reserved for a driving park and fair grounds. The property was splendidly located for such a purpose, and such an institution would yield a rich return to the city. The land could also be used to induce other factories to come here in the future.

The Commercial Association was formed, shares were sold for $10 each and the necessary monies were raised. Von Platen paid the $6,000 for his 40-acre site and also purchased the houses and other buildings for about $2,000, as promised.

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On November 28, 1910, the Von Platen Lumber Company sawmill in Iron Mountain began running day and night.

And who owned this farm and the homes thereon? None other than Edward G. Kingsford, a timber cruiser and surveyor, and his brother, Frank.

Ten years later, in 1920, Edward G. Kingsford would again play a major role in Iron Mountain's economic development by helping convince the Ford Motor Company to locate its sawmill, power house and manufacturing complex on farmlands south and west of the city.

Edward G. Kingsford and Henry Ford had crossed paths frequently well before 1920. Kingsford was married to Mary Frances "Minnie" Flaherty, daughter of Thomas and Nancy Ann (Ford) Flaherty. Nancy Ann (1834-1920) and Henry Ford's father, William Ford (1826-1905) were brother and sister, making Minnie and Henry first cousins.

Minnie was born December 5, 1865, in Houghton, Michigan. Her father designed and constructed shaft houses for various copper and iron mines throughout the Upper Peninsula. She spent her childhood in Marquette and came to Iron Mountain when she was 16 years old, in about 1882, just a couple of years after the mining settlement was established. Minnie taught school in Iron Mountain for six years, both before and after her marriage.

Edward was born March 1, 1862, in Woodstock, Ontario, Canada. When he was a young boy, his family moved to a farm in Fremont, Newaygo County, Michigan, where he worked long hours to acquire the knowledge of farming which he retained throughout his life.

At the age of 18, Edward became a timber cruiser for John Munro Longyear, of Marquette, who was then an agent for the Lake Superior Ship Canal, Railway and Iron Company.

Edward G. Kingsford and Mary Frances Flaherty were married on April 8, 1890, in Iron Mountain, Menominee County, Michigan, by Rev. M.C. Stanley, of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Listed in the 1892-1894 Iron Mountain City Directory as a member of the firm of Armstrong (Herbert) & Kingsford, real estate, surveyors and pine timber estimators, with an office in Room 11 of the Fisher Block (the original Commercial Bank building), 110 East Ludington Street, Kingsford appears in all subsequent city and county directories.

Henry Ford began manufacturing his famous Model T in 1908. According to Edward G. Kingsford's obituary, on June 10, 1908, Kingsford signed a contract with the Ford Motor Company as a sales agent in Marquette, and in the spring of 1909 the first Ford cars were brought to Marquette by boat and distributed throughout the Upper Peninsula.

The two following items appeared in the Thursday, November 11, 1909, edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* in the PERSONAL MENTION column. They are the first documented mention to date of Henry Ford being in Iron Mountain – just one year after he began manufacturing the Model T – Ford's fabulous flivver.

> *Henry J. Ford, the manufacturer of the famous Ford automobile, arrived in the city last Sunday [November 7] and is the guest of Edward G. Kingsford. Mr. Ford is an enthusiastic nimrod and expects to spend a week or ten days hunting deer in the vicinity.*
>
> *O.C. Davidson and son Harold, E.G. Kingsford and son Teddy and Henry J. Ford, the Detroit automobile manufacturer, left last Tuesday [November 9] morning for Sylvania*

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Lodge, where they will hunt deer for a week or ten days.

According to Edward G. Kingsford's obituary, when he moved his Ford automobile sales and service business to Iron Mountain, it was first located in the Chapin Mine warehouse, where he displayed his first Model T cars and parts.

A short news item, appearing under **BRIEF CITY NEWS** in the July 28, 1910 issue of the *Iron Mountain Press* noted:

Edw. G. Kingsford will erect a large garage and stable on the West Brown street property he recently purchased.

As the business grew, again, according to his obituary, Edward G. Kingsford moved to the former Freeman Livery Stable at 216 East A Street, where the business was conducted for five years.

Meanwhile, back in Detroit, Michigan, Henry Ford began operations at his factory in Highland Park in 1910. In 1913 he introduced the first moving automobile assembly line there, and a year later began paying his employees five dollars a day, nearly doubling the wages offered by other manufacturers. He cut the workday from nine to eight hours in order to convert the factory to a three-shift workday. Ford's mass-production techniques would eventually allow for the manufacture of a Model T every 24 seconds.

Henry Ford began construction of the River Rouge industrial facility in Dearborn in 1917. Back in Iron Mountain in that same year, the Kingsford Motor Company continued to expand and a new two-story brick garage and sales building was built on the northeast corner of the intersection of Brown Street and Stephenson Avenue. The building still stands today opposite the drive-through banking area of the First National Bank.

By 1919 the Model T Ford was phenomenally successful and held 40% of the domestic market. Combined with the moving assembly line and other Ford production methods, it [the Model T] *enabled Ford Motor Company to reap huge profits. Henry Ford cared little for personal wealth and reinvested most of the company's profits. He had spent $60 million dollars at River Rouge and at least $15 million for coal and iron mines. The company also had built plants and facilities throughout the country.*

While Henry Ford held a controlling interest in Ford Motor, there were other shareholders who thought profits should be distributed. The Dodge Brothers, in particular, wanted dividends to start their own automobile company and had sued Ford and The Ford Motor Company. The dispute was bitter and the ethical behavior of all parties was questionable at best. The final result was Ford's buyout of other shareholders in 1919 for about $20 million, most of which he borrowed from Eastern bankers. [Lean Manufacturing Stragegy: Ford Crisis of 1920-1921: Background]

In 1919 Henry Ford also named his son, Edsel B. Ford, president of the Ford Motor Company.

With his vast knowledge of the Upper Peninsula's lands, Kingsford was integrally involved in helping to determine the site where the Ford Plant would be built. In 1920, as authorized agent of the Ford Motor Company, he took options on lands being considered. From September 1, 1920, through April 5, 1933, Kingsford managed the Ford Motor Company's operations, first in Iron Mountain, and then throughout the entire Upper Peninsula.

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Kingsford retained his own business, the Kingsford Motor Company, while supervising the early development of the Ford Plant. In 1922, Kingsford constructed a modern garage on South Carpenter Avenue which served as a Ford assembly plant for several years. In 1926, on completion of a three-story sheet-metal warehouse behind the Carpenter Avenue plant, the company organized a branch at Crystal Falls. Continuing to expand, the company finally moved its shop, service and parts department to the South Carpenter Avenue building in 1934.

Edward G. Kingsford (March 1, 1862, Woodstock, Ontario, Canada – July 19, 1943, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan)

Mary Frances "Minnie" (Flaherty) Kingsford (December 5, 1865, Ontonagon, Ontonagon County, Michigan – May 8, 1943, 800 West Brown Street, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan)

Henry Ford (July 30, 1863, Dearborn, Michigan – April 7, 1947, Dearborn, Michigan)

The first local news item regarding Henry Ford purchasing land in Michigan's Upper Peninsula was published on Thursday, June 24, 1920, on page 7 of the *Iron Mountain Press*. The headline read: **FORD'S LAND DEAL: Now in Possession of Michigan Land & Iron Company Holdings**.

The article noted that the Henry Ford automobile interests had purchased the Michigan Land & Iron Company, a large tract of land located in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The acquisition consisted of 430,000 acres – 320,000 acres in fee simple and the balance with the mineral right only. *[These lands were mainly in Baraga, Iron and Marquette Counties.]* Originally the lands comprised the unsold portion of the land grant received by the Marquette, Houghton & Ontonagon Railroad Company from the State of Michigan as payment for constructing that railroad. In 1880, the railroad company sold the tract to what became the Michigan Land & Iron Company. The principal purchaser of this acreage was Sir Thomas Brassey, of England, later Lord Brassey, who had died in about 1917. His son was killed by a taxi in London in November, 1919, leaving no children, and the estate had to be divided among the heirs, resulting in the sale of this huge tract of Upper Peninsula real estate.

In the Wednesday, July 7, 1920, issue of *The Daily Tribune-Gazette*, another Iron Mountain newspaper of the era, a headline on page 3 announced: **HENRY FORD MAY BUILD FACTORY IN THIS CITY**. The story read as follows:

Henry Ford and son, Edsel, and Mr. [Clarence W.] *Avery, general manager of the Ford Motor Company, of Detroit, were in Iron Mountain this morning looking over a prospective site for the location of a factory to build bodies for Ford cars, and also a site for a big sawmill.*

Through an interview with the representative of The Daily Tribune-Gazette, it was learned that the Ford Motor Company intends to build a factory and sawmill in the Upper Peninsula and that three other places besides Iron Mountain are being considered as a possible location.

Mr. Ford and party are much impressed with the advantages this city has to offer. Some obstacles, however, were met with here in the way of what might be called hold-up prices, but the Ford Motor Company will not stand for anything like that and will pass up a place where people with whom they're trying to do business try to gouge the company for a big sum just

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because the Ford Company is after something.

However, we learned that the obstacles met with may be cleared up in a few days, and with this end in view the Ford Motor Company has been asked by Mr. Kingsford to keep Iron Mountain in the running until a definite settlement of the same can be made one way or the other. Mr. Ford has kindly consented to do this.

Menominee is willing to give the Ford Motor Company free sites to get the factory and sawmill there.

The following day, Thursday, July 8, under the headline **LOOKING GOOD FOR FORD FACTORY** located on page 3, "the obstacles met with" in the previous article were made apparent.

There is a rumor to the effect that Joseph Mongrain, who owns a 160-acre farm near Crystal Lake, has signed up with the Ford Motor Company for his land, the consideration being $45,000.

When a reporter from The Daily Tribune-Gazette asked Edward G. Kingsford, in charge of the Ford enterprises in the Upper Peninsula, for verification, Kingsford stated he knew nothing of it.

Mr. Mongrain says he is not looking for any hold-up price for his land and will not stand in the way and try to block the Ford Motor Company which is considering building a factory here to make bodies for Ford cars, and also a large sawmill.

Every indication points to the fact that Iron Mountain looks good to the Ford Motor Company, and it is to be hoped that neither this city, nor any of its people who may be in a position to cinch this great industry, will let the biggest opportunity that ever knocked at the door of Iron Mountain get away from it.

Editorializing within the news story, the reporter further stated:

Mr. Ford is credited with saying that if the enterprises are located in Iron Mountain, he will put two thousand men in this city within one year. Can you imagine what that would mean to this city? Is it worth going after? Does Iron Mountain need such a great industry? There is no argument against them, so let everyone pull for all his might and help land the big factory and sawmill here. This will mean the making of a new city and assure a big future for Iron Mountain. If this city or its people do anything to block these enterprises coming here, we might as well board up the town and say – it's no use.

That same day – Thursday, July 8 – the page 1 headline in the *Iron Mountain Press* read: **BIG FORD FACTORY: Location of Immense Plant in Iron Mountain Hanging in Balance.**

The urgency and concern of the community regarding the acquisition of the Mongrain farm is also evident in this article.

A crisis has been reached in the history of Iron Mountain and citizens should immediately council relative to conditions that confront them.

The Ford Motor Company is desirous of locating a factory in Iron Mountain that will employ more than 2,000 men. Some idea of the size of the proposed plant may be gained from the fact that the main building will be 4,200 feet long and 1,600 feet wide. [Apparently the reporter's source was inaccurate or he didn't have a good concept of measurement.]

In the interest of the Ford Motor Company, some of our citizens have secured options on about nine hundred acres of land south of the city limits extending to the Menominee River. The

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average price to be paid for this land is less than $100 per acre. It is necessary to include the Mongrain farm of 160 acres in the proposed factory site. Thus far Mr. Mongrain has demanded a most unreasonable price for his farm. Unless this demand is reduced most materially, Iron Mountain will lose this opportunity of securing this huge enterprise.

Mr. Ford and his son, Edsel, and C.W. Avery, general manager of the Ford Motor Company, were in the city for a few hours yesterday, coming here to inspect the proposed site. He stated that the Ford Motor Company was not seeking favors from the people of Iron Mountain in the way of a free site. All that was necessary was to place a reasonable price upon their property and the factory would come to Iron Mountain. Otherwise he would seek another location, and Mr. Ford let it be known that he had two other Upper Peninsula towns under consideration – towns in which he could secure the desired lands at a very low price.

A factory employing 2,000 men would add 10,000 to the population of Iron Mountain.

…

This immense plant can be secured for Iron Mountain, but no time should be lost in meeting a condition that may result in this factory going elsewhere.

The following day – Friday, July 9 – several articles regarding the issue at hand appeared in *The Daily Tribune-Gazette*. On page 1 the headline read: **COMMUNICATION FROM JOSEPH MONGRAIN**. In his communication, Mr. Mongrain stated:

I, the undersigned, wish to make a public statement in regard to the false impression given to the public by the two articles in the two local papers, The Tribune-Gazette, July 7th and the Iron Mountain Press July 8th. Some of our well-known citizens, who are working to secure this good and desirable concern, the Ford Motor Company, are trying to drive us out of our well and honest-earned home unfairly. The following facts will enlighten the public: Mr. Wilbur Thompson and M.J. Fox have tried to secure an option on my property, which I refused because my home was not for sale. However, when Mr. Ford asked me if I would sell at my own fair price, I asked his agent, Mr. Avery, who subsequently called on me for my price $75,000.00 for the place. His offer was $32,000 which I blankly refused, this being ridiculous as anyone with any brains will admit. Then Mr. Wilbur Thompson asked me if I would consider $50,000.00 which I also gratefully refused. The same evening Mr. Thompson, accompanied by Mr. Fox, called on me and offered $32,000 as the limit, and refusing that, I was further offered $40,000 as the limit, which I flatly turned down as anyone would. That I signed up for $45,000.00, as stated in the Tribune-Gazette, July 8th is false, just a bit of propaganda by the same parties in this city who would take away my home and farm from me without the legitimate price I am asking, and who, themselves, would give nothing, though they benefit the most.

JOSEPH MONGRAIN

The headline on page 2 boldly read: **THE FORD FACTORY QUESTION**. The community leaders gathered to take action, as is thoroughly outlined in the following story, which includes every rumor being repeated on the streets.

A mass meeting was held at the council rooms at 1:30 o'clock this afternoon for the purpose of discussing the question in regard to the possible location of a factory

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here by the Ford Motor Company to make bodies for Ford cars, and also a large sawmill.

Standing room was at a premium, so you see how anxious local people are to have the big enterprises locate here.

The meeting was called to order by J.M. Garvey, chairman of the local Commercial Association, who explained the object of it. F.C. Cole was elected chairman unanimously.

Mr. Garvey stated he went out to see Mr. Mongrain and that the latter seemed to be agreeable and willing to sell his farm, the price stated being $75,000.

W.G. Monroe stated that he had it from good authority that the maximum price offered Mr. Mongrain for his land was $50,000.

Mr. A.H. Hooper stated that in a talk over the telephone with Mr. Mongrain that the latter told him he had been made an offer of $45,000 by W. Thompson and later that it was reduced to $32,000.

Dr. J.A. Crowell stated that he understood that Mr. Kingsford had made an offer of $40,000.

E.J. DeGayner said that in an interview with Mr. Kingsford a few minutes before the meeting was held he learned that the offer was $40,000 with the stipulation that Mr. Mongrain would be given 6 months, or a year, if necessary, to vacate his land.

Last night a party of local citizens visited Mr. Mongrain and talked the big question over with him and they stated that Mr. Mongrain was willing to do the square thing but would do business with Ford's representatives directly and no one else. The members of the party were as follows: J.A. Payant, G.P. Fugere, W.A. Henze, Peter Brouillire and Dick Trepanier.

In speaking for the party, Mr. Henze stated that Mr. Mongrain's price was $75,000 and that Mr. Mongrain told the party that he had been offered $40,000 by the Ford Motor Co.

W.G. Monroe made a motion that the chairman appoint a committee of three to confer with the Ford representatives and Mr. Mongrain this afternoon and report at the meeting to be held at 7:30 o'clock tonight at the council rooms. The motion was seconded and carried. Upon suggestion of John Daprato, the committee was increased to five members. The chairman named the following persons: Dr. J.A. Crowell, G.P. Fugere, W.A. Henze, John Daprato and W.G. Monroe.

Now let's digress a decade to the proposition made to the citizens of Iron Mountain by Godfrey Von Platen when he asked their assistance in acquiring the land upon which he would built his sawmill and lumber company – the Edward G. Kingsford farm. When the group met in the council rooms on Thursday afternoon, July 8, 1920, the meeting was called to order by J.M. Garvey, chairman of the local Commercial Association. The Association had been formed a decade earlier when monies were being solicited to purchase the Ford farm.

Joseph Mongrain wanted $75,000 for his farm. The Ford Motor Company supposedly had offered him a figure between $32,000 and $50,000. Mr. Mongrain told A.H. Hooper, according to Friday's newspaper article, that the figure offered him by Wilbur Thompson, supposedly on behalf of the Ford Motor Company, was $45,000. Thus, there was a difference of $30,000.

Therefore, it should have come as no surprise to read the headline on page 1 of *The Daily Tribune-Gazette* for Monday, July 12: **$8,000 COLLECTED UP TO THIS NOON**. The article states:

Despite the report that the Ford Motor Company is to locate a plant at Republic to

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make bodies for Ford cars, also a large sawmill, the local committee named to solicit $30,000, the amount needed to purchase the Mongrain farm, is going ahead in efforts to raise the necessary sum. Up to this noon about $8,000 had been subscribed by local people.

The committee started out this morning to solicit and intends to make a thorough canvass of the city. The committee is confident that the necessary amount will be raised. The committee has not been advised at this writing that the Ford Motor Company has passed up Iron Mountain and will locate in Republic and until word comes from the company that Iron Mountain is out of the running, the local committee will keep on hustling to raise the $30,000.

It was reported here this morning that the Ford Motor Company has 127 cars of tile loaded and 25 carloads of cement ready for shipment to this city as soon as the land deal is definitely settled.

We also have it from good authority that Menominee offered the Ford Motor Company a free site and a bonus of $20,000.

Imagine the tension and excitement experienced by the community at this time. They were just thousands of dollars away from what promised to be the greatest economic and growth opportunity to come to Iron Mountain since the discovery of the Chapin Mine in 1879.

The Daily Tribune-Gazette's page 1 headline for Tuesday, July 13 expressed every confidence in closing the deal: **NO DOUBT BUT WHAT THIS CITY WILL LAND FORD FACTORY AND SAWMILL**.

The soliciting committee reports that up to this noon the sum of $15,000 had been collected of the $30,000 which this city is trying to raise through popular donations to bring the Ford factory and sawmill to Iron Mountain. Here is some very good news in regard to the gigantic enterprises: The persons who gave options on their lands recently have been notified to come in and get their money.

This, as will readily be seen, leaves no doubt but what the Ford Motor Company has decided on Iron Mountain as the logical place to build a Ford factory to make bodies for Ford cars, and also a large sawmill. The committee is now confident that the remaining $15,000 will be raised here. They went out again this afternoon collecting.

…

It has been generally understood that Iron Mountain has been recommended by Ford's engineers and officials as the logical place for the location of the plant. With this in view, options were obtained on a stretch of land comprising a large number of acres and extending from near Crystal Lake south and west to the Menominee River.

However, *The Daily Tribune-Gazette*'s page 1 headline on Wednesday, July 14, was more ominous: **FORD FACTORY HINGES ON MONGRAIN LAND DEAL FOR $40,000**. The lead sentence in the article indicated all of their hard work in soliciting the $30,000 difference was in vain.

A telegram was received here today from the Ford Motor Company saying that the company will not stand for Iron Mountain people raising $30,000 to swing the deal in regard to the Mongrain farm. The whole thing in a nut shell now is that unless Mr. Mongrain accepts the offer of the Ford Motor Company for $40,000 for his land, this city will lose the Ford factory and sawmill. The telegram also stated that the Ford Motor Company is now considering Republic as a possible location for the plant.

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The next sentence in the article seemed to present a ray of hope.

Mr. Mongrain left for Marquette Monday or Tuesday, and we understand that he left that city for Detroit upon request to do so.

Then came the hard facts of the matter and insight into Henry Ford's method of doing business.

The Ford Motor Company is not trying to run any bluff in this most vital issue which means so much to the future prosperity and advancement of Iron Mountain. Mr. Ford is known as a man who makes up his mind to do something, and then does it; and that when he says a thing, he means it and cannot be moved; in other words, the Ford Motor Company has offered Mr. Mongrain $40,000 for his 160 acres of land and he is credited with saying that $40,000 is the limit the company will pay. Now, the fact that Mr. Ford means just what he says and nothing more, in this particular instance, it means that unless the offer of $40,000 is accepted the factory and sawmill will not locate in Iron Mountain.

Up to the time that the telegram was received here, the local committee had collected twenty thousand dollars.

Editorializing once more, and plainly stating what was obviously on the mind of every resident of Dickinson County, the reporter stated:

It would certainly be too bad if this city loses out on these gigantic enterprises on account of the interested parties being unable to reach a satisfactory agreement on the price of Mr. Mongrain's land. It is to be hoped that the latter's trip to Detroit will result in everything being settled O.K., and that word will be sent here that this city has landed the factory and sawmill.

It is most probable that never again will such a big opportunity knock at the door of Iron Mountain as the one that is knocking now, and what a great loss to the future interests of this city if the door is closed against it.

…

The suspense and tension continued to mount. The headline of *The Daily Tribune-Gazette* the following day – Thursday, July 15 – said it all: **ANXIOUSLY AWAITING FOR YES OR NO ABOUT THE FORD FACTORY**.

Up to three o'clock this afternoon there was nothing new to state here about the Ford factory other than what has already been published in this paper. We were told that word is expected from Detroit most any time. Iron Mountain people are in suspense and eagerly awaiting news in regard to the big projects. Iron Mountain people are anxiously waiting for two words – Yes or No.

…

IRON MOUNTAIN LANDS FORD FACTORY AND SAWMILL: Great Joy Here Over Coming of Factory exclaimed *The Daily Tribune-Gazette*'s page 1 headline on Friday, July 16. You'll have to imagine the excitement, jubilation and relief spreading throughout the community because this issue, removed from the bound volume for 1920 to be reproduced in *The Iron Mountain News* at a later date, apparently wasn't reinserted. Thus, it isn't contained on the microfilm.

However, the Saturday, July 17, issue contained exciting information under the page 1 headline: **EXPECT MATERIAL FOR FORD PLANT HERE MONDAY**.

Engineers for the Ford Motor Company are working today on the land purchased by

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the Ford Motor Company on which will be erected a body plant and sawmill.

It is expected that the first shipment of material, which will include a large quantity of cement, will arrive here by Monday. The material is now on the way.

The announcement that the Ford Motor Company decided to locate the body plant and sawmill here has caused a big stir in real estate transactions. Since yesterday a number of lots and some property have been sold in this city.

One man stated he had sold several lots in the vicinity of Lake Antoine. Another man purchased a building on West Hughitt Street, and several owners of property here have been asked if they wanted to sell.

Yesterday afternoon some people from Negaunee, Ishpeming, Marquette and other neighboring towns autoed here and in the evening paid a visit to the City Park. During their stay here they inquired of a local citizen if there were any good lots, etc. for sale. We understand that Shea's pond has been sold, which is near Cedar Avenue.

Iron Mountain is very much in the limelight and is being talked about all over Cloverland.

…

On Monday, July 19, *The Daily Tribune-Gazette*'s page 1 headline was: **FACTS ABOUT THE FORD PLANT FOR IRON MOUNTAIN**. Rumors and street gossip were rampant and the newspaper sought to present accurate information to its readers.

The Tribune-Gazette is pleased in this issue to give out all additional and available information in regard to the location of the Ford plant here to make bodies for Ford cars, and also a large sawmill. Some outside papers carrying news of the big enterprises have stretched their imagination and some of their statements are not accurate. They seem to be getting some of the news from hearsay and from the general line of conservation about the Ford plants. What we are publishing today is accurate news, all the facts that are available at the present time, and we are getting all our news directly from a source who knows and is getting the facts. Whatever the Tribune-Gazette publishes about these big enterprises you can put down as being O.K. and first-hand information.

In an interview with Mr. Kingsford today we learned that Mr. Ford is not in the city, as has been reported. John Marsch, the well-known railroad contractor, was here yesterday and was accompanied by another gentleman, probably a representative of the Soo railroad, but we are not certain about it.

No negotiations have been settled yet as to who will build the railroad through the Ford property. However, the construction of it will be let by contract and if the Ford Motor Company can build the road cheaper themselves than by contract, the company will do it.

Mr. Kingsford stated that Mr. Mongrain has agreed to what seems to be a satisfactory agreement but that whether or not the Ford Motor Company will accept it remains to be seen, because, as Mr. Kingsford stated, the company has a very desirable site west of the city, namely almost directly west of the Pollard farm which is near the golf grounds.

It was rumored today that the Ford Motor Company closed the deal with Mr. Mongrain and that the location of the plants would be on his land. This rumor is not true. If the Mongrain deal is satisfactory to the Ford Motor Company, it is possible that the location of the plants will be changed, but nothing definite has been given out in this respect.

Mr. Kingsford stated that the site west of the city has all been staked out and that the

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Mongrain land is being staked out to see how it fits in, and that word is being awaited from the Ford Motor Company whether or not a change will be made.

The first shipment of material for the construction of the power house and the sawmill which will be the first to be built is expected here most any day. Just as soon as the material arrives work will commence.

Mr. Kingsford stated that the railroad work will be pushed and that the company will be ready within a few days to go ahead with it. It is desired to put the railroad in as quickly as possible. Whether or not the Mongrain site is selected for the plants, it will make no difference in regard to the railroad. It will run from about three blocks south of H Street along the south edge of the Mongrain farm and will be about three miles long. Fifteen thousand railroad ties will be used.

Mr. Kingsford stated that many men would be employed in the construction work and that boarding camps will be built where the men will be fed. Other camps will be built for rooming purposes. Later on and in due time the Ford Motor company will construct houses for their employees.

The sawmill will be about three times as large as the Von Platen mill here and will have a capacity of about one hundred and twenty-five thousand feet per day.

The body plant will be four thousand, two hundred feet long, which is almost eighth tenths of a mile and it will be one thousand, six hundred feet in width. All the plants will be of reinforced concrete and will have steel frame windows, such as are used in modern factories. The plants will be operated by steam turbines.

Mr. Kingsford stated that at the start all wood work for Ford cars will be finished at the local plants and that most of it would be sent direct to the Ford assembling plants in other cities.

Spur tracks will be built from the main railroad and will enter each end of the plant and the main line will run right by it.

Mr. Kingsford stated that the Ford Motor Company now has about all the land they desire and that the options held by the company cover everything west and south between the city and the Menominee River. He stated that he knew nothing of the reports that the company is obtaining options on more land here north of the present site, or in any other direction.

According to local people who attended the Sons of St. George reunion at Houghton, papers in the copper country in Saturday's issues carried news to the effect that Iron Mountain was celebrating in great style over the coming of the Ford factory. It was stated that all stores were closed and business in general suspended on account of the joyous news. These reports are not true as far as stores being closed, etc. However, the people are very jubilant but no public celebration has yet been held. We don't think it would be a bad idea to set aside a half day if possible to celebrate publicly.

The coming of the Ford plant means a great and glorious future for Iron Mountain and Dickinson County as a whole. It also means much to all of Cloverland, particularly so, no doubt, to cities and towns in the immediate vicinity.

A regularly-featured column captioned **FORD FACTORY NEWS** first appeared on page 1 on Tuesday, July 20. As usual, the primary source of information in these columns was Edward G. Kingsford.

The Tribune-Gazette learned today from Mr. Kingsford that satisfactory arrangements had been made between the Ford Motor Company and Mr. Joseph Mongrain in regard to his land. It is possible now that the location of the Ford

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plants will be changed to this site, although no definite decision has yet been reached.

The first shipment of material for the big enterprises should be here some time this week. It will include a large quantity of cement and steel. Many tons of steel will be used in the construction of the plants. Most of the steel that will be used will be produced by the Ford Motor Company at Detroit.

Outside of this news, Mr. Kingsford reports that there is nothing new in particular to say today.

How much did the Ford Motor Company pay Joseph Mongrain for his 160-acre farm? The final price was never stated in the newspapers, nor is the actual price recorded in the records in the Register of Deeds Office in the Dickinson County Court House. The amount recorded on the documents there is "one dollar," a common practice of the time.

Information in the **FORD FACTORY NEWS** column on Wednesday, July 21 was minimal.

The switch, frogs and rails for the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Road which will connect with the railroad to be built by the Ford Motor Company on their land south of the Mongrain farm will arrive here in a few days. Just as soon as the switch material arrives the extra gang of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul will be put to work. It will only take a day or two to do the work.

The Ford Motor Company will rush the work on their three miles of track and are desirous of having the railroad built as quickly as possible.

Mr. Kingsford stated today that the Ford Motor Company has not decided yet whether or not the location of the plants will be changed from the present site to the Mongrain site.

Outside of this news there is nothing special to say today.

A list of the Ford Motor Company assembly and branch plants, located in 29 cities across the United States, was provided as an item of interest.

[Perhaps it will be of interest at this particular time to know in what cities the Ford Motor Company has assembly and branch plants. They are as follows: Atlanta, Georgia; Buffalo, New York; Cambridge, Massachusetts; Charlotte, North Carolina; Chicago, Ill.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Cleveland, Ohio; Columbus, Ohio; Dallas, Texas; Denver, Colorado; Des Moines, Iowa; Detroit, Mich.; Fargo, North Dakota; Houston, Texas; Indianapolis, Indiana; Kansas City, Missouri; Los Angeles, California; Louisville, Kentucky; Memphis, Tennessee; Milwaukee, Wis.; Minneapolis, Minn.; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Omaha, Nebraska; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Portland, Oregon; St. Louis, Missouri; San Francisco, California; Seattle, Washington; Washington, District of Columbia.]

The following day – Thursday, July 22 – *The Daily Tribune-Gazette* headline on page 1 read: **TO BUILD FORD PLANT ON SOUTH PART OF MONGRAIN'S FARM** over an article containing this information:

Mr. Avery of Detroit, general manager of the Ford Motor Company, arrived in the city today for the purpose of looking over the two sites for the location of the Ford body plant and sawmill. The representative of this paper was informed that the site on the south part of the Mongrain farm had been selected and the erection of the sawmill and power house will be started just as soon as the first shipment of cement and steel, etc.

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arrive, which is expected will be here this week or next.

John Marsch, the well-known railroad contractor, owner of the Wisconsin & Michigan railway, is also in the city today and the contract has been let to him to build the three miles of track which the Ford Motor Company will have put in on their property. Because of the fact that the company desires to have the railroad built as quickly as possible, Mr. Marsch will commence work on it at once, most likely next week.

On Saturday, July 24, under the page 1 headline **CONCRETE MIXER FOR FORD PLANT ARRIVES HERE**, readers of *The Daily Tribune-Gazette* learned:

A carload of machinery for mixing concrete arrived here this morning over the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad to be used by the Ford Motor Company in the construction of their sawmill and power house.

A shipment of cement, and portable houses for the use of the employees, and other material is expected here in a day or two.

Martin King, of this city, received a telegram today from John Marsch, who has the contract to build the three miles of track for the Ford Motor Company, to unload two carloads of horses and mules which will arrive here today from Janesville, Wis. Work on the construction of the railroad will commence next week, most likely on Monday or Tuesday. [NOTE: There were 16 mules and four horses.]

Owing to the fact that the land on which the railway will be built is quite level, there will not be much grading work to do. It is expected that not more than two weeks will be required to construct the track.

Nick Nerenhausen, superintendent for Mr. Marsch, and Mr. Brasky, who is also in his employ, will arrive here Monday. Mr. Nerenhausen will have charge of the work here.

This same day – Saturday, July 24 – the switch, and rails to the right of way for the Ford railroad were put by the extra gang of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad Company, and things were now in readiness for Mr. Marsch to commence work.

The Daily Tribune-Gazette's page 1 headline on Monday, July 26 read: **READY TO START WORK ON FORD PLANTS**.

There are seven carloads of cement here now for the Ford Motor Company to be used in the construction of their sawmill and power house. In addition to this, two carloads of portable houses to be used for housing the men temporarily arrived here this morning over the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad. These houses come in sections, 15 feet each in length and two sections wide. These sections can be placed one after another and the portable houses may be made as long as is desired.

The hauling of the cement and other equipment to the site of the plants will be started at once.

Three carloads of construction outfit arrived here this morning over the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad which was shipped by John Marsch, who has the contract to build three miles of track for the Ford Motor Company.

…

Ernest Pederson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gust Pederson of this city, who has been in the employ of the Ford Motor Company at Detroit for the last ten years, having charge of production, arrived here yesterday morning to stay and will serve the company in a like capacity here. He is an Iron Mountain young man, having been born and reared here. By faithful and efficient

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services he was promoted at various times by the Ford Company to positions of trust and now holds a lucrative and responsible position.

Mr. Remington will have charge of the sawmill and Mr. Lovejoy will be the head of the commercial department.

A number of men arrived here this morning from Calumet and Houghton seeking employment with the Ford Motor Company. They stated that they heard that the company had one hundred tractors at work on their land here. We understand they intend to remain in the city and wait for work in the construction of the plants.

During the last several days Mr. Kingsford, who conducts a Sales and Service station here, has received a large number of communications from persons in various parts of the Upper Peninsula inquiring as to chances of employment. A number of communications have been received from former Iron Mountain young men and former residents in regard to positions at the Ford plants.

…

On Thursday, July 29, *The Daily Tribune-Gazette*'s headline on page 1 read: **WORK AT FORD PROPERTY GOING ALONG VERY GOOD** *[sic]*.

Eight carloads of rails and twelve carloads of railroad ties arrived here this morning over the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad for the railway now being built on the Ford property. Mr. Brasky, foreman for John Marsch, who has the contract to build the road, stated this morning that about twenty-five men are being employed by Mr. Marsch and that just as soon as a little more grading is done the laying of the rails will commence. He reports that everything is moving along in a satisfactory manner.

Work at the site of the Ford plant is going along well, fifteen or twenty men being employed there now. Some of the men are engaged in digging a well. One of the portable houses has been put up and the others will be erected as soon as possible. Material for the construction of the sawmill and power house is being hauled to the property.

The *Iron Mountain Press*, the weekly newspaper, in its Thursday, July 29, edition, noted much of the same information contained in *The Daily Tribune-Gazette*, but did have some additional details.

The Ford Motor Company has purchased from Mrs. [John – "Minnie"] *Trenary for the residence property on the south side of East Brown Street* [207 East Brown Street]*, in the rear of the Carbis Meat Market, and will erect thereon an office building. The building will be thirty-five by sixty-five feet on the foundations and two stories in height. Architect Parmelee is now engaged in drafting the plans for the building.*

This general office building was only a short distance from the Edward G. Kingsford's Sales and Service Station, located at the corner of East Brown Street and South Stephenson Avenue.

Four days later, on Monday, August 2, in the **FORD FACTORY NEWS** column on page 1 of *The Daily Tribune-Gazette* it was noted:

E.G. Kingsford, who conducts a Ford Sales and Service Station here, has received one thousand or more applications for work at the Ford plant now in the course of construction in this city. The applicants for positions include skilled and unskilled workmen. All parts of the Upper Peninsula are represented, and applications have

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been received from Detroit, Milwaukee and many other cities. A large number who desire to work at the factory are former Iron Mountain residents. The copper country is well represented in the list of applicants.

A steam shovel has arrived here for John Marsch, who is building the three miles of railroad on the Ford property. Today the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul work train is loading 14 cars of ties, between this city and Pembine, which will be used in the construction of the road. Six more carloads of rails and three carloads of cement have arrived here.

…

The first construction work on the Ford Motor Company's Iron Mountain plant occurred on Tuesday, August 3.

On Thursday, August 5, the *Iron Mountain Press* ran the following headline and story on page 1: **CONCRETE POURED: Construction Work on Ford Saw-Mill and Power-House Under Way**.

The foundations are now being constructed for the mammoth sawmill and equally mammoth power house. Work on these buildings will be rushed forward as rapidly as men can do the work. The walls above ground will be constructed of stucco on steel frames. The supporting columns will be of concrete steel re-enforced. The sawmill will be unique in sawmill construction as now viewed and it will include every labor-saving device now known to the industry and many new ones. The sawing equipment includes two band saws, a gang saw and re-saw. The size of the mill on the foundations is 200 feet in length and 125 feet in width. The cost of the mill has been estimated at $250,000. Work has also been started on the powerhouse. This building is 250 feet long and 40 feet wide and it will house one of the greatest batteries of boilers in the west. The plants will furnish all the power for the mill and the several factories.

John Marsch, who has the contract for building the spur track from the St. Paul road to the factory, is employing about one hundred men in the work. Grading is in progress on both sides of Carpenter Avenue. A cut of about seven or eight feet is encountered in crossing the Robbins farm, but west of Carpenter the grading is comparatively easy. The St. Paul Road will build the bridge across the Crystal Lake outlet and the timbers are en route. The ties and rails are also in the St. Paul yards.

The Press can state that the Ford Motor Company has no intention of building a new town on the lands recently purchased. It is the desire of the Ford Motor Company, we are informed, to have their factories and holdings incorporated within the limits of the City of Iron Mountain. The company will not engage in the mercantile or any other business other than that appertaining to the manufacture of Ford car parts.

It is the intention of the Ford Company to beautify the district immediately surrounding Crystal Lake, making it a playground for their employees and citizens in general. The scheme includes a well constructed boulevard around the lake and the planting of much shrubbery and trees. Homes for employees will also be erected in the vicinity of the lake.

Plans are also being made for extensive logging operations and a number of camps will be operated, but their location has not yet been decided upon. Logs sufficient to keep the big mill in active operation with day and night crews will be cut and shipped to Iron Mountain during the winter and this means employment for five hundred or more men. Like the Von Platen Company, the camps will be operated winter and summer.

The Michigan Iron, Land and Lumber Company has been incorporated to handle

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this branch of the industry. The officers elected are: President – Henry Ford; vice-president and assistant treasurer – Edward G. Kingsford; treasurer – Edsel Ford; secretary – C.B. Longley.

The Ford Motor Company has closed the deal for the purchase of the Trenary residence property on the south side of East Brown Street and will erect thereon an office building to cost more than $25,000. The location of the office building in that district should have a tendency to keep the town from slumping to the south and hold real estate prices level.

The desire of the Ford Motor Company to have their several industries – constructed at a cost of more than $1,000,000 – incorporated in the limits of the City of Iron Mountain should meet with an enthusiastic affirmative response from our citizens. And the incorporation of the plants within the city limits means many problems for our city government and public utility companies to solve, and there should be no delay in solving them. The building of new streets and the extension of the sewer system means a large money expenditure. This expense can be met only by a bond issue and this bond issue should be sufficiently large to provide for the needs of a city of not less than 50,000 people. The issue should be for not less than $250,000. Then the Water and Light and Power Companies should plan to greatly enlarge their plants at once for a greater Iron Mountain. New school buildings will also be necessary, but an increase in volume of taxable property may provide for this demand. Now is the time to plan for greater things. The county road commission is already moving and last Monday decided to improve the highway leading west from Carpenter Avenue to the factory sites on the Mongrain farm and will do this work at once.

The page 1 headline in the *Iron Mountain Press* two weeks later, on Thursday, August 19, read: **BUILD FIFTY HOMES: Near Crystal Lake At Once by Michigan Iron, Land & Lumber Co.**

The Michigan Iron, Land & Lumber Company has been organized by the Ford Motor Company interests for the purpose of conducting the Iron Mountain sawmill and body plant as well as the extensive logging operations. The company has been organized under the laws of Michigan with a capital stock of $2,000,000. The company has been officered as follows: President – Henry Ford; vice-president and assistant treasurer – Edward G. Kingsford; treasurer – Edsel Ford; secretary – C.B. Longley.

Mr. Longley, the secretary, will remove here from Detroit as soon as he can secure a home.

An office building for the company is to be erected at once on East Brown Street, on the Trenary property, which was purchased recently. The materials for the building are now arriving and it is expected to start the work of excavating at once. It will be two stories in height with part basement and will be constructed of brick and re-enforced concrete. It will have a frontage on Brown Street of 31.4 feet, at the rear 44 feet and 52 feet in depth. It will contain eight large and roomy offices, four on each floor, and a large vault room. The plans were made by F.E. Parmelee and his son Gale.

The Michigan Iron, Land & Lumber Company has also placed orders for the materials for the erection of fifty modern dwelling houses. They will be erected in the Crystal Lake district and they will be ready for tenants in the course of a month or two. The materials are now being framed at the factory in Lower Michigan and the residences can be erected in short order upon their arrival. The homes will

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contain six and eight rooms and will cost from $4,000 to $8,000 each and the lots will have a frontage of 50 feet and a depth of 150 feet. Unlike the average company houses, each will be of a distinctive style of architecture, and they will contain all the modern improvements. The erection of these homes is the forerunner of the many hundred that the company will build.

The company, it is learned, will assist workmen in the erection of their own homes. Lots of large size will be sold at a most reasonable price and the men will be aided in erection.

At the sawmill and power plant the construction work is making really marvelous headway. The foundations are practically finished and structural steel work is now in hand. With present progress, it would appear that the sawmill will be in operation before the close of the year, provided the machinery arrives as contracted for. Many visitors are daily callers at the plant and expressions of wonder at the immensity of the plant are heard on all sides. The assertion that the plant will employ 2,500 men before the close of the year 1921 can readily be believed. All the men that can work to an advantage are being employed and the construction materials are arriving promptly.

Work on the railroad is nearing completion and it is hoped to have cars running to the plant early in September.

A week later, on Thursday, August 26, *The Daily Tribune-Gazette*'s page 1 headline noted: **MANY CARLOADS OF STRUCTURAL IRON FOR FORD PLANT HERE**.

Work in the construction of the Ford plant in this city is moving along rapidly and in a very satisfactory manner. Special efforts are being made to get as much work done as possible before winter sets in. A carload of structural iron arrived here this morning over the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad and was immediately unloaded at the property. Some idea of the amount of work that is being done may be gleaned from the fact that several carloads of structural iron have arrived here within the last few weeks and the further fact that fifteen more carloads are now on the way to this city from Detroit. Within the near future the material for 50 or more houses which the company will build for its employees will arrive here.

Work in building the railroad through the property is also hustling along. A mile or more of the road has been built and rails have been laid as far as the building where the structural iron work is now in progress. From now on the railroad work will move along more rapidly because of the fact that the greatest grades have been completed. Work at the property is being helped along materially owing to the fact that the railroad is now long enough to permit the unloading of material at the property instead of hauling it from the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul tracks.

A week later, the *Iron Mountain Press*, on page 1 of the Thursday, September 2, edition captioned a short article: **Machinery for Mill**.

The Michigan Iron, Land & Lumber Company has placed an order with the Allis-Chalmers Company, of Milwaukee, for several hundred thousand dollars worth of machinery for the Iron Mountain sawmill.

Work on the mill is progressing at remarkable speed, much of the structural steel being in position. The same is true at the power house and both buildings will be under roof in advance of schedule.

Work has started on the office building on East Brown Street and the brick and other materials are arriving rapidly.

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Work on the railroad is nearing completion.

On Thursday, September 9, one week later, *The Daily Tribune-Gazette* ran the following headline and article on the front page: **WORK AT FORD FACTORY IS MOVING ALONG**.

Nine more carloads of rails arrived here today for the Ford property. All the grading work at the property has been completed, so we have been told, and the laying of the remainder of the rails will be started tomorrow. More than a mile of the road has already been completed.

Several more carloads of structural steel have also arrived for the Ford plant. Work at the property continues to progress in a most satisfactory manner and the great amount of work that has been done in a comparatively short time is a surprise to all who visit the plant.

A large quantity of bricks have arrived here to be used in the construction of the company's big office building to be built near the Ford sales and service station, which is operated by E.G. Kingsford.

…

Five weeks later, on Thursday, October 14, a short, page 1 article had the following headline: **Fords Are Hunting**.

Henry Ford and his son, Edsel, arrived in the city from Detroit Monday [October 11] *about noon, making the trip in automobile via Menominee and the Ann Arbor ferry boat. The Fords were accompanied here by C.W. Avery, superintendent of the Ford Motor Company, William Smith and Charles Sorenson, the metallurgist of the company. Accompanied by E.G. Kingsford, the party left here last Tuesday morning for Long Lake, where they expected to do some bird hunting. Incidentally, The Press learns that the visit also has something to do with iron mines.*

In a lengthy article on the front page of the Monday, October 18, issue of*The Daily Tribune-Gazette*, the headline read: **PLAN OF HENRY FORD'S NEWEST PROJECT** with a Detroit, Michigan, dateline, undoubtedly written by the Ford Motor Company's publicity department.

Step by step – each step a giant's stride – Henry Ford adds to the wealth and power of the industrial monarchy he is creating.

Now Ford has safeguarded the enormous supplies of timber and part of the iron he needs in his factories, not only for his generation, but for generations to come.

Here is the general plan of the newest Ford project, given by a man who was active in the negotiations.

Ford bought 425,000 acres of land in the Upper Peninsula of the state.

There are huge forests of hardwood, principally maple on 312,000 acres of the land and deposits of iron and graphite on 100,000 acres.

The purchase price is kept secret, though popular guess puts it above $20,000,000.

Ford is now building a sawmill at Iron Mountain, Mich., and by the end of next year will have a large "body" plant well under construction.

He will build the metal and wooden "superstructures" of the Ford car at this plant, shipping them to his assembling plants all over the world direct from the factory of Iron Mountain.

So that his forests may furnish timber all the years that Ford cars are built, Ford has a plan of forest conservation. The timber will be taken out carefully so that new growth is not disturbed and a big force of men will constantly patrol the forests on the watch for fire.

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The land Ford has bought was granted some 60 years ago to a railway company, long defunct. It later was bought by the Michigan Iron & Land Company and by them sold to a Ford company – the Michigan Iron, Land and Lumber Company. The stock is held wholly by the Ford family.

Although there are some iron mines on the land, none of them are now being worked. Ford expects to establish new mines as soon as the sawmill is complete and work on the body plant under way.

The land is well supplied with railways, three of them traversing it.

The Ford forests are 600 miles from Detroit. They lie in five counties. From Marquette, in alternate 640-acre sections, the land stretches 70 miles west, and from the town of Channing, Mich., it extends 45 miles north, in alternate sections.

Associates of Ford believe that the purchase of the land was a favorite enterprise of the automobile genius. Negotiations were in progress 10 months and the "deal closed" only recently.

"Although the bulk of the timber will go to making the bodies of cars, much of it also will be used in the other enterprises of Ford, and some probably will go to the building of the homes of his employees. Ford uses in excess of 1,000,000,000 feet of lumber a year.

Work on the Iron Mountain body plant will be rushed. When it is complete it will require about 2,000 workmen.

Information obtained from *The Ford Man*, a publication of the Ford Motor Company, was quoted in a page 1 article in the Monday, October 18, issue of *The Daily Tribune-Gazette* with the following headline: **FORD WILL EMPLOY 500 MEN AT THE UPPER PENINSULA CAMPS**.

According to The Ford Man, published at the Ford headquarters in Detroit, 500 or more men will be employed at the company's upper peninsula camps during the coming winter, to supply timber for the new sawmill, now under construction in this city. It is also announced that the mill will be kept in active operation, with day and night crews. A number of camps will be operated, but the publication states that it has not yet been decided just where they will be located on the 400,000 acre tract purchased some months ago by the Ford interests from the Michigan Land & Iron Company.

Henry Ford, head of the big automobile enterprise, was a visitor in Republic last week. He was accompanied by other officers of the company. While the Detroit men gave out no information as to the object of their visit, Republic citizens are hoping that one of the company's logging camps will be established near that town. Mr. Ford and his associates spent some time in the woods looking over the timber and they departed from there by automobile for Iron Mountain, where they inspected the new buildings.

Three days later, on Thursday, October 21, the *Iron Mountain Press* published a small, but important article on the front page under the headline: **WILL MINE ORE**.

While in Iron Mountain last week, Henry Ford and his son, Edsel, and their several engineers, did not spend all their time in hunting birds or in inspecting the local plants. Some time was spent at the Imperial Mine, at Michigamme, to which Mr. Ford has secured title, including the stock of the old holding company. Samples were taken and the engineers will be called upon for a report as to its value as a Ford asset. The Press has assurance that the Ford interests will become miners of iron ore sooner than most people anticipated.

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A follow-up story on the Imperial Mine appeared one week later, on Thusday, October 28, again on the front page of the *Iron Mountain Press* with a splashier headline: **OPEN IMPERIAL MINE: Property Long Idle Will Be Resurrected By Ford Interests**.

As a result of recent examinations of that property by his mining engineer and metallurgist, Henry Ford will open the Imperial Mine at once. The Imperial is located in Baraga County on section 25, town 48, range 31, and a short distance from the Village of Michigamme.

It was opened in 1882 and after that was secured on lease by the Cleveland-Cliffs Iron Company, who operated it for several years and then gave it up in April 1919. The mine has produced 636,533 tons of ore, the last shipment being made in 1913. Before giving up the mine the Cleveland-Cliffs Company built a substantial steel headframe that is still in position near the shaft. The workings of the mine are shallow, less than 200 feet below surface. The ore is a limonite, non-bessemer. The mine buildings are still standing intact, and in good condition, and it will require only a short time to unwater the levels and begin mining. The decision to begin operations here by the new purchaser will be news gladly received by the people of Michigamme, who have lacked some such enterprise in which their labor can find employment.

The opening of the Imperial suggests that the Ford interests may get busy at other points where ore has been found and that a system of exploration of other lands for minerals may be inaugurated. – Iron Ore.

In the same issue of the *Iron Mountain Press*, also on the front page, was a small news item regarding medical assistance for Ford employees at the Iron Mountain operation:

E.G. Kingsford, vice-president of the Michigan Land, Iron and Lumber Company, has notified The Press that Dr. Joseph A. Crowell, chief surgeon for the Oliver Iron Mining Company, has been appointed to the same position with his corporation.

Dr. Crowell came to Iron Mountain in November, 1882, as a doctor for the Chapin Mine, and was a well-respected, senior physician in the city.

On Monday, November 29, the first carload of logs for the Ford sawmill still under construction arrived. The event was recorded on the front page of the *Iron Mountain Press* for Thursday, December 2, 1920, as follows: **FIRST LOGS FOR FORD PLANT: First Carload Arrived Here Yesterday**.

When the clock struck three in this city last Monday afternoon it carried a significance with it for Iron Mountain, for it marked the arrival of the first carload of logs for the Ford sawmill now under construction here. The arrival of the logs was noted with unusual interest by the Ford employees because it was the initial shipment to the Ford plant, an industry that means a prosperous and rosy future for Iron Mountain.

The arrival of the logs was hailed with a degree of delight probably proportionate to that which hailed the turning out of the first Ford car years ago at the Ford Motor plant in Detroit.

We understand that ten million feet of logs will be unloaded at the Ford property here before the winter is over and that the sawing of them will be started in the spring.

Work at the property is progressing nicely. The power house is now all enclosed, and within two days or so the

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outside work of the sawmill will be completed, a little stucco work remaining to be done and some glass to be put in.

EPILOGUE

This *Iron Mountain Press* article, published on Thursday, December 2, 1920, is the last found to date. Surviving issues of the *Iron Mountain Press* are sporadic beginning by mid-1917. The 1918 issues are also incomplete. No issues at all have been encountered for 1919. Fortunately, the surviving 1920 issues of these two newspapers – the *Iron Mountain Press* and *The Daily Tribune-Gazette* – have allowed us to piece together the establishment of the Ford Motor Company's plant in Iron Mountain which has just been told.

Both the *Iron Mountain Press*, a weekly which began in 1896, and *The Daily Range-Tribune*, a merger of two earlier daily Iron Mountain newspapers, were purchased by Frank J. Russell, Sr. and merged to form a new daily newspaper, *The Iron Mountain Daily News*, which began publication on Monday, April 11, 1921. Russell owned the *Marquette Mining Journal*, and certainly was aware of the positive economic impact the Ford Motor Company would have on the area when their plant opened in Iron Mountain.

The following information came from articles published in *The Iron Mountain Daily News* on Tuesday, July 12, 1921, the day the Ford sawmill officially started operations. Background material in the articles included in this edition provide insight in what happened between the end of 1920 and the day the sawmill was put into service.

On January 1, 1921, work was suspended, and until April 1, 1921, *the organization practically marked time. A few men were kept on the job installing such machinery as they could but the activity was a small fraction of that which had been seen before.*

A little research in economic conditions in the United States at the time shows that there was "an extremely sharp deflationary recession in the United States shortly after the end of World War I." This recession lasted for 18 months – from January, 1920 to July, 1921. Indeed, the year 1920 was the single most deflationary year in American history. The Department of Commerce estimated 18 per cent deflation, while wholesale prices declined by 36.8 per cent, the most severe drop since the American Revolutionary War.

As noted earlier, Ford bought out the other shareholders in the Ford Motor Company in 1919 for about $20 million, most of which he borrowed from Eastern bankers.

Thus, the *Ford Motor Company entered the recession of 1920-1921 with considerable debt and when sales dropped precipitously a crises ensued. Robert Lacey describes the recession as follows:*

It was not difficult to sell cars in America in the months that followed the First World War, since automobile production had been cut back severely as the manufacturers had turned their factories over to war production. With peace, the national waiting list for new cars soon came to number in the hundreds of thousands. As a general economic boom intensified this demand, Detroit discovered how pleasant life can be when America has money to spend.

But the boom ran out abruptly in the summer of 1920. Worried by inflation, the federal government cut its budget, pulling $6 billion out of the economy. Suddenly the Motor City discovered the down side. For it is amazing, when times get hard, how easy it becomes to live with the rust and rattles of the automobile that you had once been

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[By William John Cummings]

intent on trading in. Forgoing the new car is the most obvious economy to make in a time of recession, and recession gripped America. In the autumn of 1920, the cyclical nature of the car business was revealed for the first time: scaling the heights in time of prosperity, but almost at a standstill when the economy slowed. Henry Ford was in trouble. He owed money to Eastern bankers, sales were plummeting and Ford Motor Company was losing twenty dollars on each car produced. [Lean Manufacturing Stragegy: Ford Crisis of 1920-1921]

A crisis always seemed to galvanize Henry Ford and bring out the stubbornness and imagination in him. He had steered through several such crises in the past.

Ford's first reaction was to cut prices with the largest reduction in automotive history (It had worked before). But, dominant as Ford Motor Company was, it could not stave off a national recession alone. Sales plummeted again and the situation looked increasingly desperate. Henry Ford even organized a gigantic rummage sale that included desks, cabinets and pencil sharpeners. The general opinion was that Ford would lose control of his company to the bankers. This was especially galling to Ford who had a low opinion of bankers in general and East coast bankers in particular. Now, he owed them $60 million and bankruptcy seemed imminent.

Ernest Kanzler had run the Fordson tractor operations during the Great War. He had been highly successful at reducing inventory and freeing up plant space by scheduling deliveries and shipments exactly when needed. In 1919, Ford brought Kanzler to the Highland Park plant to do the same. Kanzler was just getting started when the recession hit.

When Ford's price reductions failed to maintain sales volume, Ford and Kanzler realized that the inventory strategy might just save the day. Highland Park was awash with inventory and spare parts, perhaps $88 million worth. Kanzler went to work and Just-In-Time delivery was born.

By the spring of 1921 Ford had paid all his debts and the company had a cash surplus of $20 million. Productivity also improved. Prior to the recession, Highland Park required about 15 men per car per day. Afterwards, the factory operated with about 9.0 men per car per day. This was a 40% reduction in labor cost.

Other aspects of Ford's tactics were more controversial. Ford dealers were required to pay cash on delivery so Ford and Kanzler began sending them cars, along with a huge number of spare parts, whether the dealers had ordered them or not. Owning a Ford dealership was the next best thing to owning a gold mine. So the dealers took the cars and the parts and then borrowed to pay for them. Their only other choice was to relinquish the franchise.

Ford's suppliers were also squeezed. Price reductions were made arbitrarily by Ford and payment was unilaterally extended from 60 days to 90 days. The suppliers, like the dealers, had little choice but to go along. [Lean Manufacturing Stragegy: Ford Crisis of 1920-1921: Ford Responds]

The following information again is taken from articles published in *The Iron Mountain Daily News* on Tuesday, July 12, 1921, the day the Ford sawmill officially started operations.

With the spring, however, things began to brighten. The force was gradually increased, until at present, not counting the sawmill operating crew, it numbers as many men as before the shutdown. Machines

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went up as if by magic. Rolls were installed, conveyor belts built, and the huge boilers bricked in. Some weeks ago the construction gang started on the first dry kiln, which is now ready to receive the lumber as it comes from the saws.

Excavation for the office building of the Michigan Iron, Land & Lumber Company, located just east of Stephenson Avenue on Brown Street, was started September 18, and the completed structure was ready for occupancy shortly after April 1. The company moved in about April 15.

Early in June, even a layman could see that the plant was virtually completed. Even the great smokestack was in place. Six million feet of logs lay ready in the storage yards of the plant for the beginning of operations.

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