1912 HORSE & BUGGY RIDE FROM FELCH TO IRON MOUNTAIN

By Walter Mattson

[Transcribed and Edited by William J. Cummings]

FORWARD

In this year I am going back to the year 1912. That was a big year for me for many reasons. I started school that year for one thing. At that time the first year was called Chart Class. Shortly after that it was called Kindergarten. Starting school is always a major event in a youngster's life and I was no different.

I also had a chance to go to the big city of Iron Mountain – my first trip. This was really a big thrill and to make it even greater, I would be going on my first train ride. Now this may not seem very exciting to many of you now when we can travel from Felch to Iron Mountain in about half an hour; but, back in those good old "Horse and Buggy" days lots of planning had to be done. It was very exciting.

That is what this book is about – my first trip to Iron Mountain and my first train ride. It's the story of some of the exciting and new things I saw and did that I can remember.

Come along for the ride and enjoy yourself. Maybe a few of you "old-timers" will have a few good memories too.

Walter Mattson

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Walter Mattson's parents were John P. and Ida (Timmer) Mattson. "Grandpa" in Walter's account was Gust Timmer, his mother's father.]

CHAPTER I

We lived about two miles west of Felch in Metropolitan, Michigan. In those days all the homes had the mail order catalogues. In our home I remember we had the Montgomery Ward, Sears Roebuck and the John M. Smith Company catalogues. Those were the three major ones at that time.

It was around the middle of June and my parents had sent for an order of clothing from one of those catalogues. Of course there was no 24 hour service then like there is today in many places. The whole system was slow!

About a week after the order had been mailed, my Dad would walk down to the post office to see if the order had come in. The post office was about a mile from where we lived. Now this may seem unimportant to many of you but getting mail, and more so a package, was very exciting. Our home was about 400 feet from the main road and I and my brother Carl would walk up to this road every day and wait for Dad to come from the post office. About the 10th day we saw him coming and he was carrying two packages – one under each arm. We ran to meet him and got the packages and raced for home.

We ran into the house and put the packages on the kitchen table and waited anxiously for Dad to get there to open them…Of course there was no scotch *[sic – Scotch]* tape then. The packages were tied with heavy binder twine. Dad came walking into the kitchen, took out his pocket knife and cut the twine on both packages. I was standing on a chair on one side of the table and little Elof was across from me. Carl was just standing on the floor – he had a longer wheel base and could see further than us.

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Our mother was picking the packages apart. There were clothes for all of us. Finally she got hold of a pair of brown corduroy pants that she held up to me to see how they were for size. They were perfect! We all had the same kind of pants. These were not long. They were the knickerbocker pants which were the style for little boys in those days. We even had new black stockings to wear with the pants.

Of course these new clothes were to be worn on special occasions so everything was put aside in a dresser drawer for that special occasion. I didn't know then that my special occasion was not too far away.

CHAPTER II

This bird's-eye-view postcard of West Metropolitan was taken by E. Brukardt between 1910 and 1915 from the southeast looking to the northwest. The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church (upper center) was organized August 21, 1895, the first church building being constructed in 1900. Due to a growing congregation, the church was replaced by a new church in 1907, now the Zion Lutheran Church. The first building was pulled to the new site and became a "wing" of the new structure, sometimes referred to as the annex. Erik and Brita Skog, born in Jeppo Finland, were among the first people of Swedish descent to come from Finland and settle in Felch Township. Their home in Metropolitan, located across the road from the church, was often referred to as Skog's "big house". The Skogs built this house in about 1888, and boarded sawmill workers. The main part of the structure had eleven rooms, seven of which were bedrooms, and an attached wing which served as a "summer kitchen," a feature of many farm houses of the time. The summer kitchen was used to cook food, serve meals and can vegetables and fruit, eliminating the need to fire up the cook stove in the main part of the house, helping to keep it cool for

sleeping and other uses. The large house on the right just across the railroad tracks was the home of Matt J. and Maria (Anderson) Johnson. Matt, born in Purmo, Finland, arrived in Metropolitan February 11, 1887. Maria, born in Jeppo, Finland, came to Metropolitan in 1889 and met Matt, a boarder at the Erik Skog boarding house, where she worked. They were married in Escanaba June 9, 1893. [William John Cummings]

A few days later we saw my Grandpa coming across the field. Now Grandpa was crippled and he walked with a limp and carried a cane. He had been helping one of the neighbors build a barn and had fallen off the roof. As a result of that fall he had dislocated a hip. Some 60 years ago it was not easy to find doctors in this area who could fix it.

When Grandpa got to our house he sat down on the back porch and crossed his feet. This was his favorite way of sitting. I imagine it was the most comfortable for him. I know that if he sat in one place too long he was in great pain when he did move.

After discussing the weather and other things in general, we all went into the house. We had no sooner gotten into the house when Grandpa told us the reason he had come over. He had to make a trip to Iron Mountain and was planning on going right after the Fourth of July. This in itself was very exciting but to make it even more so he wanted to take me with him.

I'll never forget how excited I was! I still remember the day so clearly. While my Mom and Dad were discussing the whole thing with Grandpa, my baby sister started crying. Mom told me to go rock the cradle to quiet her down and now this didn't go over with me at all. I rushed into the bedroom and noticed that the baby had lost her rubber nipple. I stuck it in her mouth and it didn't do any good – she just spit it right out. Of course I was very impatient, wondering what was going on in the kitchen. I grabbed the nipple, rushed into the kitchen, stuck that nipple in the sugar bowl and rushed back into the bedroom. That did the trick – she quieted down. I knew all the tricks to quieting babies.

Meanwhile back in the kitchen, Mom and Dad decided that I could go to Iron Mountain with Grandpa. Oh boy, did that make me happy. I had never been so far away from home before or been on a train. For sure I'd be wearing my new clothes soon.

CHAPTER III

The Fourth of July came and went and the smell of firecrackers was heavy in the air. Grandpa sent word over that we would be going to Iron Mountain on Friday. I can't remember if it was the 6th or 7th of July. *[NOTE: In 1912, Friday was July 5th.]*

The night before we were to go I was so excited. I had my new pants hanging on the chair along with my new socks and the rest of my clothes. There was a nice little brown jacket my Mother had made for me. I wanted to have everything ready.

Let me tell you that there was one excited boy who went to bed that night. My brother Carl had been to Iron Mountain once with my Dad and he told me all about the big city.

After quite a while I finally fell asleep only to wake up to a bad thunder storm. That's all we needed! I could hear the rain falling so hard too. I laid there with my hands clasped back of my head hoping that it would not be raining in the morning. I kept repeating that little verse:

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Rain, rain, go away,
Come again some other day.

Soon I heard the thunder fade away and I knew that the rain would not last much longer.

The next thing I knew my eyes popped open and I could hear a noise in the kitchen downstairs. Dad was getting the fire started in the old cook stove.

I got out of bed, picked up my tennis shoes and rushed down the stairs. Dad looked at me and told me not to get dressed yet. He said it was very foggy and muggy outside and Grandpa might postpone the trip. I really felt bad when Dad told me that. A good kick in the pants couldn't have hurt me more.

Soon Mom walked into the kitchen and put the coffeepot on. Then she went outside and after a short time came back in and said the weather was clearing up and it looked as though it was going to be a nice day after all. Before I put on my new clothes I had to wash up. She made sure I did a darned good job of it too. Had to check behind my ears even. Finally I was able to put my clothes on. The new pants looked real good but my shoes weren't the best and I remember my cap wasn't either. It had a wrinkled brim. I didn't care – I felt great! All set for my first trip to the big city – Iron Mountain.

CHAPTER IV

Grandpa Gust Timmer's home appeared in front of John Blomquist's home with the large barn at the far right and a field of haycocks in the foreground. This postcard view was taken by Conant, an Escanaba photographer, probably between 1910 and 1915. [Beatrice Blomquist]

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Now I had to walk over to my Grandma and Grandpa's house. They lived about a quarter of a mile away across the field. There was a narrow path from our house to theirs. There were long strands of timothy hay hanging across the path and this hay was so wet. I had to stick in my hand and had to beat at that hay to get the water off. Didn't want my clothes to get too wet. It was still pretty foggy out too but I didn't think our trip would be postponed. Sure had my fingers crossed.

When I got to the house, Grandpa was sitting on his back porch smoking his pipe. He had his blue overall jacket laying across his knees and I knew that this meant we were really going to Iron Mountain.

I was having a little trouble with one of the buckles on my new pants. It kept coming loose and sliding down below my knee. Grandpa fixed it for me. Just then Grandma came out of the house. She told me I looked real nice and then she gave me a quarter to spend. My Mom had given me a quarter, too, so, I really felt rich. Mom had also given me money and a slip for two pounds of black wool yarn. She gave me strict orders to remember to tell Grandpa.

Grandpa had made arrangements the day before with John Blomquist to use his horse Billy to get us to Randville. John Blomquist was Grandpa's neighbor. He lived about 500 feet from his place. He was becoming one of the biggest farmers in our area. He had three horses at the time – Billy was more or less a utility horse. The other two made up a team of work horses. Billy was a crackerjack of a horse when it came to cultivating between the stumps and boulders. He was a good reliable horse, Grandpa said.

It only took Grandpa and me a short time to walk to the Blomquist barn. When we got there Mr. Blomquist was standing there looking at his pocket watch and then up at the sky. He and Grandpa talked a little about the weather and finally went into the barn to get Billy.

Now there was a neat barn! I can recall that they were always neat farmers. A place for everything and everything in its place.

The men harnessed Billy in the barn. Then he was brought out and led to the water tank for a drunk after which he was taken to the buggy to be hitched to it. That sure was a nice buggy. It had a top on it that would not only protect us from the hot sun but would also keep us dry if it rained. The seat even had a cushion on it. There was a holder for a whip although there was no whip. Neither Grandpa or John Blomquist believed in whips.

When John had hitched Billy to the buggy he helped Grandpa get up to his seat. Of course I was already seated, raring to go. When we pulled out of the barnyard John waved to us and as we passed the house, Mrs. Blomquist was standing on the porch waving too. As I said before, going to Iron Mountain was an event!

Grandpa pulled out his thick pocket watch to check the time and I saw a smile on his face. It still seemed like a dream to me but there we were:

Grandpa and me;
And Billy made three;
All on our way to Randville to catch the 9:15.

CHAPTER V

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The horse and buggy pictured here are probably similar to the one Grandpa Gust Timmer borrowed from John Blomquist to ride to Randville and back. By 1902 Louis M. Hansen was operating this livery stable at 411-413 South Stephenson Avenue, and also operated an undertaking parlor at 217 East Hughitt Street in the Robbins Block. This livery stable was being demolished at the end of March, 1910, as a new brick business block was being erected there by A.C. Cook and Herbert M. Pelham. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

In those days, on that old road, I would say it was close to 12 miles to Randville. The road was very crooked and narrow. Most of the road was sandy and dusty too. It was a far cry from the 569 that we have today.

There was still a lot of fog but Grandpa said that the sun would probably come out and burn the fog away and it would be quite warm. As we were driving along we saw several farmers going about their various chores. Most of them were heading toward their barns to feed their cattle and milk the cows. They all waved and yelled a word or two. It seems they all knew we were on our way to the city.

About a mile from home we came to a long, steep hill that we had to go down. Now this hill wasn't really steep but at the bottom of it there was this river. It was the West Branch of the Sturgeon that flowed through the valley there. In those days there were a few dams that controlled the flow of the water.

I must add that the thought of going down that hill and crossing that river was on my mind. I admit I was pretty frightened. It seemed the closer we got to the hill the tenser I got and Grandpa seemed to sense this. As we started down I sort of stood up and hung on to the edge of the seat. Grandpa told me to sit down and relax – there was nothing to be

afraid of. So I half stood and half sat – all ready to jump in case something went wrong as we approached the bridge. The river was very fast and wicked looking that day and I was not about to get my ass wet. Grandpa held the reins in tight and we went down the hill and when we were about a hundred feet away from the wooden A-frame bridge, he gave Billy a little slack on the lines and he trotted right across the bridge. I know I had my eyes closed as we crossed but I sure heard that bridge rattle!

On the other side of the river there was a small incline and when we got to the top of this small hill Grandpa let Billy stop and take a little rest. He didn't need a long rest. Good old Billy – he knew exactly what to do and how to do it.

We were not driving through the woods and the limbs of the trees were very close to the buggy. I would reach out and grab a handful of leaves as we went along. I noticed Grandpa checking his watch and then he sort of grunted and nodded his head so I knew we were running on schedule.

It wasn't too long before we were in open country again. The sun had now burned the fog away and it seemed that the whole world around us had come to life. The birds were singing and we saw a couple of chipmunks scooting across the road ahead of us. Grandpa told me that it was going to be a very hot day and that we would soon have to take our jackets off.

Taken in 1919, this view of the Erick Johnson farm, located in Princeton, exemplifies the "good" farmland that greeted the settlers in Felch Township. Cut-over lands were sold cheaply to those people who remained in the area after the Metropolitan Lumber Company sawmill closed. This farm became the Fabian Steinbrecher potato farm, where championship Russet Burbanks were grown. [Beatrice Blomquist]

We were now in the area of the big Steinbrecker potato farm and the road was pretty straight. He put the two leather lines in my hands and told me I could now be the driver.

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Right then and there I grew up quite a bit. I was so proud to think that I was driving Billy. Billy seemed to know there were different hands on the reins because he gave his head a jerk and Grandpa told me to give him all the slack he wanted and everything would be fine. That Billy was a good horse!

From now on we would be driving through woods most of the way to Randville. If there was a big tree, the road would be around one side. It was easier to have a road wind around the trees than it was to remove the trees. That is one reason why the roads had so many curves.

The Groveland Iron Mining Company was organized about 1886, and several shafts had been sunk in 1887, and 3,000 tons of ore had been mined. The Groveland Mine, located near Randville, opened in 1901 and was actively mined until 1913. This postcard view, taken by E. Brukardt, probably between 1910 and 1915, shows a bit of the settlement and the mine shaft and trestle in the background. When Grandpa Gust Timmer and Walter stopped here for the horse Billy's "pit stop," it probably appeared like this postcard view. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

We were now in the area of the old Groveland Mine and Billy had to make his first "pit stop". Grandpa told me to let Billy stop whenever he wanted to so I just let him. I sat there and watched Billy make a big puddle in the sand. It was really getting hot so we

decided to take our jackets off. We put them under the seat to keep them out of the way and they would not get as dusty.

Grandpa told me that we were a little more than half way to Randville and he said that if everything went according to plan we would be there about half an hour before our train came. We were plodding along at a pretty even speed. After a while you could see Billy's head sort of rock from side to side in time with his steps. The long trip and the heat was getting to him. Grandpa said that we would be at Randville in about half an hour.

All of a sudden Billy decided to make another stop so Grandpa and I figured that maybe we'd better follow Billy's example. It took Grandpa quite a while to get his legs uncrossed and when he finally stood up his whole body quivered. You could tell that he was in great pain after sitting for so long. After he was finished, Grandpa sat down on the seat, crossed his legs, filled his pipe and then he took the reins from my hands and it was my turn to go. I was only a little boy and I didn't make much of a puddle in the sand. I was shooting for distance – The Rainbow Style. I gave the seat of my pants a little jerk and I was back on the seat alongside of Grandpa and we were off again.

All of a sudden Billy stopped and his ears were sticking straight up. There was a big pine snake crossing the road. It must have been about five feet long and was almost black. It was quite a struggle for that snake, getting across the road in the loose sand. He seemed to be going backwards as much as he went forwards. Finally it was across and we were again on our way.

We came to a small grade and Grandpa said that Randville was just on the other side of the hill.

Sure enough, there it was. You could smell coal smoke in the air and Grandpa said that a train had just gone through. Billy seemed to know that we were there too because he walked just a little faster.

As we drove up to the livery stable a man came across the road with both hands on his hips. He walked up to the buggy and shook hands with Grandpa. His name was Tom Carney. I jumped out of the buggy and was patted on the head and asked what my name was. He then helped my Grandpa get down. Grandpa stood for a long time and hung onto the front wheel of the buggy waiting for the blood to start circulating in his sore hip so he could start moving.

Mr. Carney unhooked Billy from the buggy and was leading him to the water trough. As Billy was having a drink I was standing right next to him patting his head. I sure thought Billy was a darned good horse. Then Mr. Carney led him to the barn and took his harness off and hung it on a big wooden peg. Grandpa came limping into the barn to check things out and make sure all was okay.

Randville was a pretty busy little town in those days. The main road going north to Channing and Sagola separated the livery stable from the saloon. There were a lot more horses and a lot more trains and I'm sure there were a few more buildings then, too, than there are today. I remember that Sagola had a big sawmill and Channing was the hub of the railroads in this area. It is still quite active with their railroads and trains. They still have the roundhouse even though all the passenger trains for our area are gone.

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Postmarked Channing, Mich., December 2, 1910, this postcard view was actually taken in 1909 and shows the railroad roundhouse and a number of railroad cars on various tracks. Note the three early steam engines and the ties in the foreground. [William John Cummings]

I remember standing at the doorway of the livery stable that day watching a lady dusting a carpet outside of the saloon. I asked Mr. Carney if they sold any candy in the saloon and he said to go in and see his wife, Lora. I had those two quarters that my Mother and Grandma had given me and they were burning a hole in my pocket.

Mrs. Carney had licorice sticks in her candy case and I sure liked licorice. I bought five sticks at a penny a piece. I put one stick in my mouth and the bag in my back pocket and went back to the barn.

Grandpa and Mr. Carney were coming out and Grandpa was licking his mustache and I knew that he had gotten himself a little "nip" from Tom. Now my Grandpa was not a drinking man but he would take a nip now and then to be sociable.

I should add that Grandpa was a pure Finn and could speak Swedish quite well; but, his English wasn't worth a damn. I heard him tell Tom that I am a "Tam goot little poy" *[damned good little boy]* and that was the reason he took me along.

The three of us started walking to the depot. I was too excited and started running. I figured that the men were just too slow to suit me. When I got to the depot there was a very nice looking lady standing there. She was also waiting for the train and she said she was going all the way to Chicago. I can remember so clearly that I thought how sweet looking she was. She had on a big picture had with a lot of flowers on it. Her dress was real long and she had a black suitcase. I was telling her that this was my first trip to the city and just about then Grandpa and Mr. Carney got to the depot. Grandpa went inside and bought his ticket – I can't recall if he had to buy one for me or not. He took out his fat pocket watch and said the train should be coming very soon. It was due in Randville at 9:15 and sure enough – before long we saw smoke and then we could see the train.

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This is an early photograph of the Randville depot where Walter Mattson and Grandpa Gust Timmer waited for the train to take them to Iron Mountain. [William John Cummings]

My heart was beating so fast as the train came closer. The locomotive went thundering past the depot and came to s screeching halt. Then the conductor came out carrying a small black box. He set this box down on the platform for the lady and Grandpa to use as a step. The conductor and Grandpa shook hands and spoke some Finnish words to each other. They seemed well acquainted.

Grandpa and I finally got seated but the lady went into a different car.

CHAPTER VI

There were other men in the same train as Grandpa and me. One was reading a newspaper and the other fellow was sleeping on the seat with his feet stuck out the window. My first thought, when I got on the train, was to find a seat by the window so I could see all the sights. I got my seat and sat there with my head on the sill just waiting to start moving.

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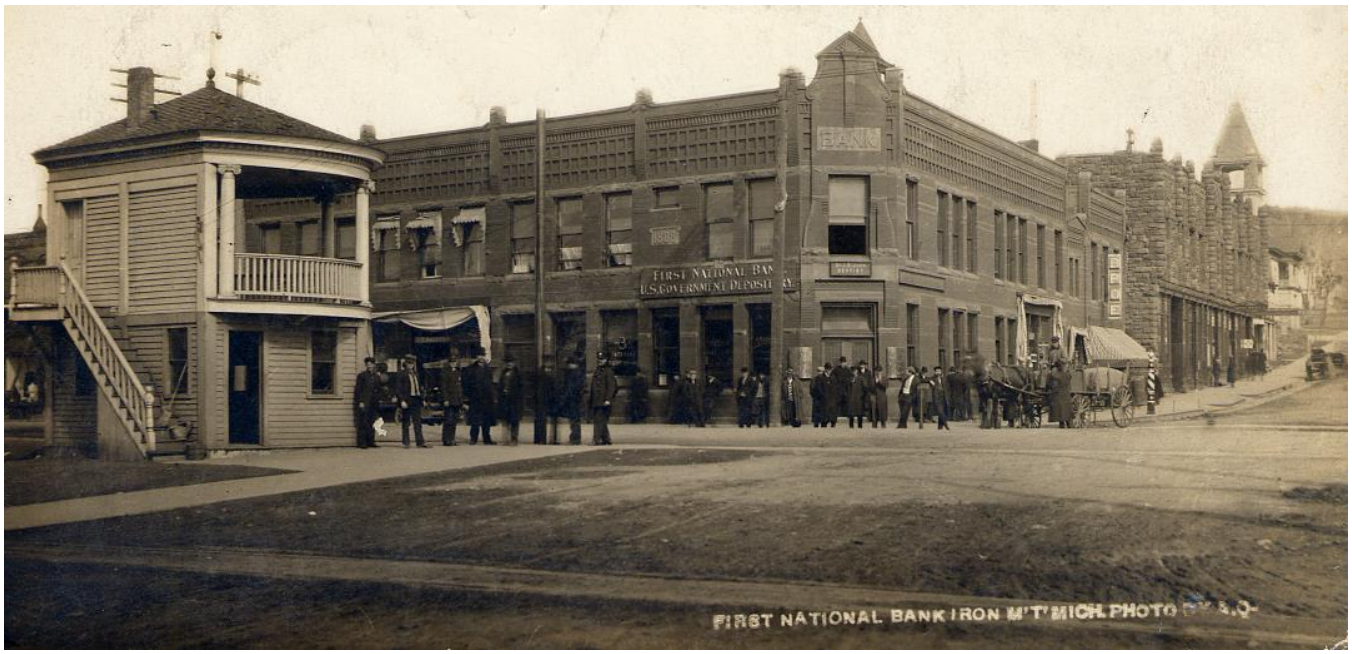
The Randville stop was a short one and the conductor soon came into the car carrying the little black box. He set the box down and walked right on through the train. After making his tour of the train, he came back and sat and talked in Finnish to Grandpa.

I was so excited when we started moving. It started so slowly and went faster and faster. The bushes and trees seemed to be moving by so fast. I ran back and forth across the aisle several times, from window to window. Guess I wanted to be sure I wasn't going to miss a thing. The view was pretty much the same on both sides.

Now no one had told me about the black soot flying in the air from the engine. All of a sudden Grandpa and the conductor started laughing at me. They said my face was filthy. The conductor went into a different car and came back with a damp cloth and towel and helped me clean up. I kept my face away from the window after that.

It seemed no time at all that I noticed Grandpa looking at his watch again. He told me that we would soon be in Iron Mountain. I kept looking ahead and soon was able to see a lot of buildings in the distance. They got closer and closer! The conductor came by me and sort of patted me on the head and said it would not be long before I would see the city for the first time.

The train slowed pace and Grandpa pointed out a high building. He said it was a brewery. Then we were entering the railroad yard. There were so many tracks and trains. Now we were coming to the main street in the North Side of Iron Mountain. As we went by I noticed that there were gates across the street. Grandpa noticed I was so excited and he explained how a man who sat in a tower controlled the dropping gates as a train approached. We did not see any automobiles but there sure were a lot of horses. There were great big horses with big wagons and smaller horses with smaller wagons. There were a lot of them lined up waiting for the train to go through.



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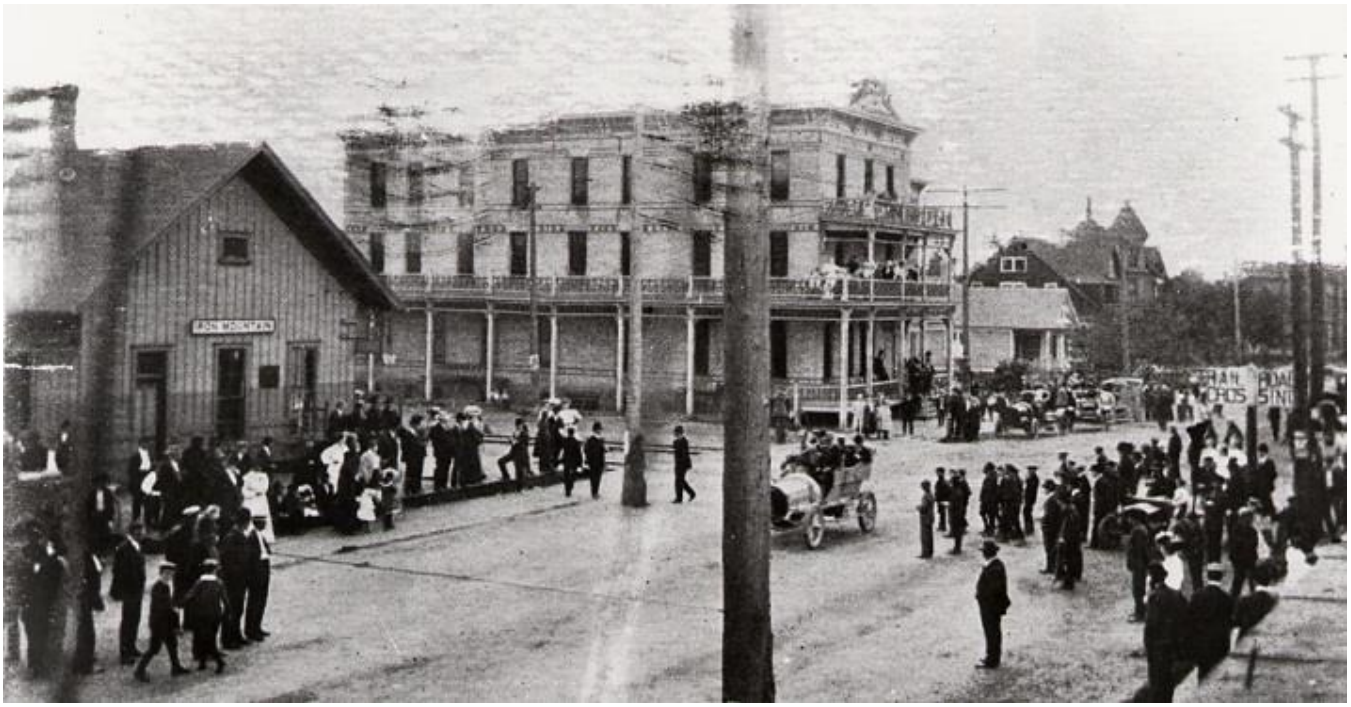
This view of the northeast corner of South Stephenson Avenue and East Ludington Street, postmarked 1913 and taken by Albert Quade, shows the Wood Block, housing the First National Bank and other businesses, the Wood Sandstone Block, housing the Iron Mountain City Hall, the post office and other businesses, and the Carnegie Library. Walter Mattson and Grandpa Gust Timmer would have passed this principal intersection of Iron Mountain as they headed to the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul depot on East B Street. The store located to the immediate right of the bank with the furled, light-colored awning was occupied by C.E. Anderson & Co., a general merchandise store at 225 South Stephenson Avenue and also 202 East Ludington Avenue, probably where the furled awning is visible. There is also a barber pole behind the horse-drawn cart at the curb, advertising Axel Carlson's barber shop, also located at 202 East Ludington Street. Louis Stokely's drug store, located at 204 East Ludington Street, is the business establishment with the awning down at the end of the Wood Block and west of Wood's Sandstone Block, where the Iron Mountain City Hall offices and the post office were located. The vertical sign above probably indicates the B.P.O.E. (Elks) Lodge No. 700 which maintained rooms on the second floor. The bandstand, at the northwest corner of South Stephenson Avenue and East Ludington Street, also served as the police station at the lower level. Charles A. Lundgren served as chief of police in 1913. The bandstand was later moved to St. Paul Park, on the west side of the 600 block of South Stephenson Avenue near the St. Paul Depot. [William John Cummings]

I couldn't help but notice all the birds on the streets, too. There were pigeons and English Sparrows all over. They had plenty to eat with that many horses around.



Walter Mattson and Grandpa Gust Timmer arrived at the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul depot at the left with "IRON MOUNTAIN" above the door. The line of early automobiles

processing east on Iron Mountain's B Street in this postcard view may have been en route to the first annual hill climbing contest sponsored by the Menominee Range Automobile Club on September 2, 1907. The course was up East B Street from Stephenson Avenue to Superintendent Elwin F. Brown's house at the Pewabic Mine. The three-story Commercial Hotel, then operated by Claude H. Milliman and Frank M. Milliman, was Iron Mountain's primere hotel, and was later known as the Milliman Hotel, the Dickinson Hotel and finally the Dickinson Inn. In 1907, the residences further down the block belonged to of Andrew Swanson (115), Fred C. Parmelee (119) and J.T. Mason (126). [William John Cummings]

We sat down on a bench outside the depot and waited for the train to leave. Before long the conductor yelled, "All aboard" and the train began to move away. For the first time I noticed how long the train was. There were about eight coaches besides the engine.

Walter Mattson and Grandpa Gust Timmer's first stop was at the Dickinson County Court House, located on the east side of the 700 block of South Stephenson Avenue. Taken by Albert Quade, probably between 1910 and 1914, this view of the Dickinson County Court House, shows the south side of the building, shows the Dickinson County Jail with its turret at the right. Note the absence of clock faces in the Court House tower. The clock in the court house was installed January 25, 1935. [William John Cummings]

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Now it was time for us to start moving too. First of all we had to go to the courthouse. Grandpa had some important business to take care of and wanted it out of the way before we did any shopping.

We walked real slow towards the courthouse and as we got near, Grandpa pointed out the big clocks on top of it. He pulled out his watch and I could hear him mumbling to himself and at the same time he was doing a little hand spiking. Guess he wanted his watch to be the same as the big courthouse clock.

We walked into the courthouse and I sure thought it was a big building. It seemed so tall – such a long way to the ceiling. Some of the people there came and shook hands with Grandpa. It seemed that no matter where we went somebody knew him. I think the fact that he was crippled made it easier for people to remember him.

I never knew why he had to go to the courthouse but whatever it was, it didn't take long. I sat and patiently waited and while I was sitting there a very friendly looking lady came up to me and pinched my cheek. She said I had very cute dimples. I did not even know what she meant. I was just a little dumb in some ways.

We walked down the sidewalk from the courthouse to Stephenson Avenue. There were small pieces of firecrackers lying alongside of the sidewalk. We saw some flags and other decorations on some of the buildings. They had had a big Fourth of July celebration a few days before. The sun was really getting hot and Grandpa was sweating just a little bit. I was too interested in all the sights to feel the heat. I was always walking ahead of Grandpa and I'd get so far in front of him and then I would turn around and go back to him.

I remember the sidewalks were narrow and the show windows in the stores were not near as large as they are today.

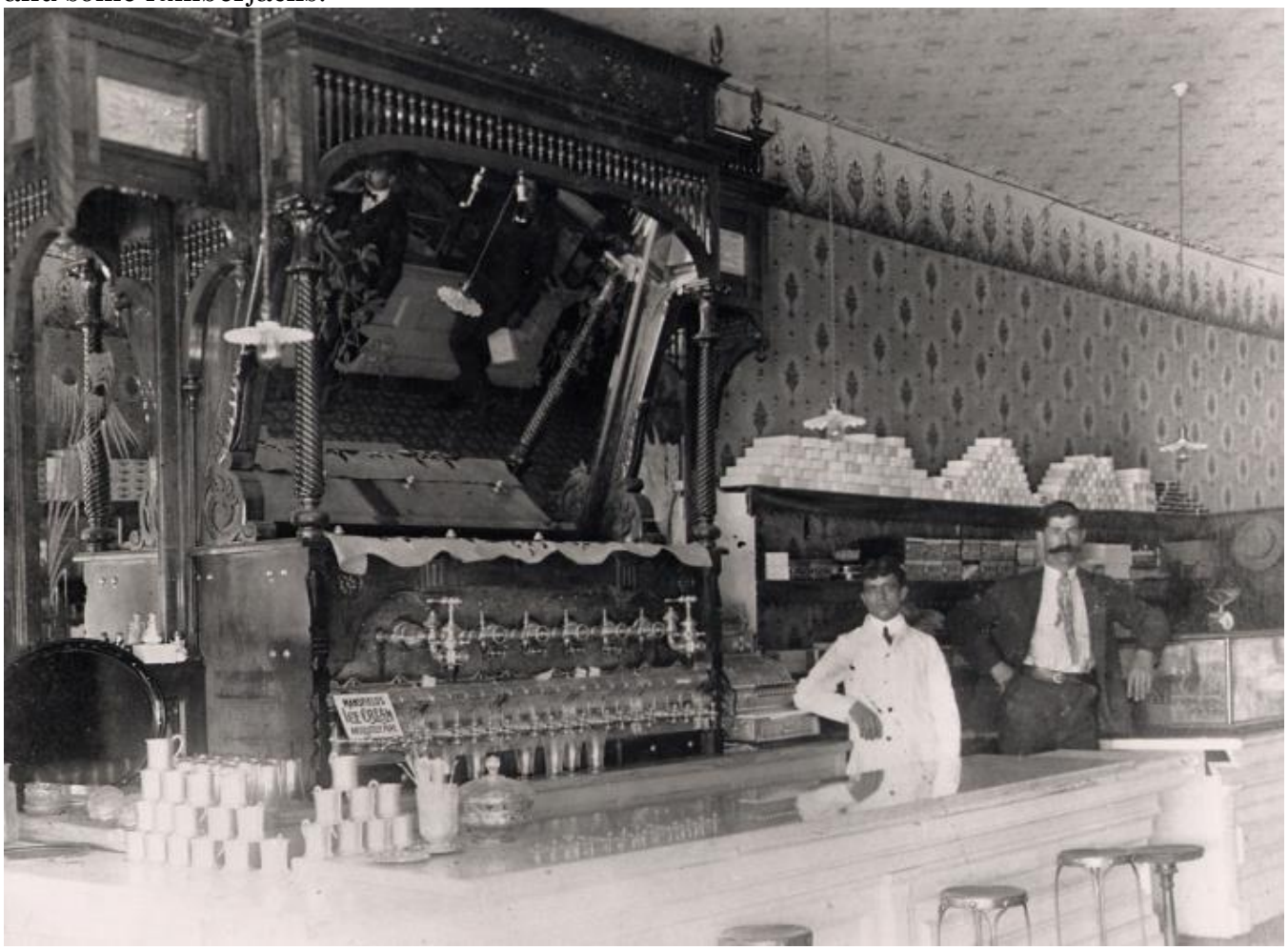
Grandpa said our next stop was to be at a clothing store. We went to the Levi & Unger Clothing Store. That was the first of many trips I made to that store. After looking around inside the store, Grandpa bought himself a new pair of overalls and also a new jacket. He bought me a nice new straw hat. The clerk tried three on me before he found one that fit. I sure was proud of that new hat. Grandpa put my old cap in his back pocket.

From the Levi & Unger Store we went to a different store where we bought the yarn my Mother had ordered. I guess my excitement really must have been showing because everyone seemed to look twice at me and they all gave me a big smile. As we moved on down the sidewalk we came to a store where a man was sweeping the sidewalk in front. My Grandpa and this man shook hands and after talking for a while we were invited into the store to rest. The man's name was Abe Khoury and I can remember he had a big handlebar mustache. As far as I was concerned, this was the best store of all. It was an ice cream parlor and Grandpa had a drink of root beer and Mr. Khoury brought me a nice dish of ice cream with red flavoring on it. I don't remember if it was strawberry or raspberry but it was red and it sure was good!

As the years rolled by I went into the ice cream parlor every time I went to town. I think it was the only one on Stephenson Avenue at that time. At least its *[sic – it's]* the only one I knew of.

When we left the ice cream parlor Grandpa wanted to cross the street to the Northwestern Depot and sit in the shade and relax for awhile *[sic – a while]*. I was

carrying the bundle of yarn and although it wasn't heavy it was a little bulky. Grandpa found a good place to sit where we could put our packages down too. There were quite a few other men sitting around the depot and resting too. Most of the men were Italian, Swede or Cousinjack *[sic – Cousin Jack – English or Cornish]*. There were some miners and some lumberjacks.



Michael Khoury operated two shops selling "fruits and confections" on South Stephenson Avenue in 1913, one here and another at 533. Sam Khoury (left) and Abe Khoury (right) are pictured. Abe Khoury was the man with whom Grandpa Gust Timmer spoke and served young Walter Mattson a dish of ice cream with red flavoring. Note the elaborate soda fountain with numerous polished spigots and an array of glassware. Confectionery items were probably displayed in the case upon which Abe's left arm rested. Two customers are reflected in the mirror above the soda fountain. [Susan Khoury]

Well, sitting and listening to a bunch of men talking was not exactly what a little boy would call interesting. I lasted only a little while and then I asked Grandpa if I could cross back to the other side of the street and look around. He said I could but he gave me strict orders to stay on the main street and not to go up any of the side streets.

1912 HORSE & BUGGY RIDE FROM FELCH TO IRON MOUNTAIN

By Walter Mattson

[Transcribed and Edited by William J. Cummings]

I started up the street, stopping at almost every window to see what they had to offer. There was so much to see. I stepped to the edge of the sidewalk to watch all the birds. It seemed that the birds were not at all afraid of the horses and wagons. They would just step to one side and let the wagons go by. The pigeons would break up the big horse turds and then the sparrows would move in. There was plenty for all to eat.

I stopped to watch a man who was cleaning the street. He had a two wheel cart, a push broom and a scoop shovel. He wore a big straw hat. After I asked him what he was doing and he had explained his job to me, he asked me where I was from. I told him I lived near Felch and that fellow told me he had been up to Felch several times to hunt rabbits. We talked for quite a while.

Postmarked Iron Mountain, July 18, 1910, this view shows the north end of the 400 block of South Stephenson Avenue, looking north. Tommy Perkins, probably the man young Walter Mattson spoke with as he walked about Iron Mountain, stood beside the wheeled barrel used to pick up horse manure from the streets. The M. Levy Co. store behind him was where Grandpa Gust Timmer bought Walter his new straw hat. In 1907, the following businesses were located here: 401, John McKenna, liquors and cigars, with Mrs. James

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(Jennie) Lalley living upstairs; 405, The Parent Clothing Store (Charles Parent), clothing, furnishings, trunks, valises, shoes, etc.; 407, Wills & Carbis (Thomas Wills and William J. Carbis), groceries and meats; 409, Khoury Bros., (Paul Khoury and Sam Khoury, salesman, who lived upstairs), confectioneries, fruits, cigars, ice cream, etc.; 413, L.M. Hansen, livery stable (single story with diamond-shaped windows); 417-419, M. Levy Company (Albert Levy, Henry M. Levy and Isaac Unger), department store. The M. Levy Company, of Ft. Atkinson, Wis., established a branch store here in September, 1887, which proved very successful. On April 30, 1898, The Range-Tribune *noted that J.E. Clancy, the Green architect for the new Levy building, brought the plans for the two-story, brick structure with the main rooms being 50x100 feet, and the firm occupying both the lower and upper floors. This building burned February 28, 1982. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]*

I kept walking up the sidewalk till I got close to the courthouse again and then I decided to turn around and head back. I found a few firecrackers by the edge of the sidewalk and I put them in my pocket hoping they were good ones. I put a piece of licorice in my mouth and I was really enjoying myself. I felt so big. I noticed two ladies walking ahead of me. The both wore those big pictures *[sic – picture]* hats. One had high button shoes on and the other one wore laced shoes. Even at my tender age I was looking at ladies from the bottom up. I was ready to pass the ladies when the one bent over to retire her shoe lace and sort of backed me against a building. I had a tight squeeze there for a second.

As I came close to the ice cream parlor I heard music coming from inside. I walked in and when Mr. Khoury saw me, he asked me if I wanted an ice cream cone. Now I knew what ice cream was, but a cone was something new to me. I wanted to pay him for it; but he said no – it was on the house. Everything started off fine – the ice cream tasted delicious. I hadn't gone very far when all of a sudden I sprang a leak in the bottom and the ice cream started dripping into my hand. There I was trying to catch every damn drop. I tried to hold the cone in the palm of my hands but that is where I really got into trouble. The ice cream was coming out of both ends. I finally stuck the big end into my mouth and sucked the cone dry. It sure was messy but I was determined to get every drop. I didn't care if anyone saw me or not. I must say that it was an enjoyable experience, that first ice cream cone.

A little further up the street I can to the harness shop. I stood there for a long time looking at the nice things they had for horses. Some of the harnesses had brass buttons. Even the horse collars looked nice and shiny.

As I was standing there looking I felt something hit my new hat and my shirt sleeve. I looked at my sleeve and there was bird shit – I took my hat off and sure enough, a pigeon had really let me have it. I looked up and really let go with some choice words. For a little boy I wasn't dumb in that area.

That was enough for me! I walked back to the depot carrying my hat in my hand and I was very disgusted. To make matters worse, when the men saw what had happened they laughed and laughed. One of the men took my hat and told me to follow him. We went to the livery stable where he cleaned it with water. The hat did get nice and clean again but

it was a bit soggy. I made sure it was good and dry before I put it back on my head. That was enough exploring for me.

Guess I must have been sort of tired out. All that walking and the excitement in one day. I was content to sit there by Grandpa. He said that before long we would move over to the other depot where we would catch the train heading north to Randville.

The Chicago & Northwestern Railway passenger depot, located on the west side of the 300 block of South Stephenson Avenue, was opened to the public on Sunday, December 22, 1889. Perhaps Walter Mattson and Grandpa Gust Timmer sat in the shade of the long, covered platform. Notice the Montgomery Block, built in 1887, across the street and the Nelson, Morris Company building at the far right, a wholesale meat warehouse. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

Soon Grandpa got up on his feet and for a long time he leaned against the building. I could see that he was in great pain. We finally started moving slowly up the sidewalk carrying our packages. As we walked along, I kept looking up, thinking of the pigeons and what had happened to my new hat. I guess it could have been a lot worse – it's a good thing cows don't fly.

That walk to the Milwaukee Road Depot seemed so long to Grandpa and me. It was very hot out yet. When we finally got there, Grandpa checked the time and said we still had about half an hour before the train came. It was about 4:00 in the afternoon. The

train was coming all the way from Chicago. The last stop before Iron Mountain was at Pembine, Wisconsin. My Grandpa always explained things to me so patiently.

We found a place in the shade to sit and Grandpa took his hat off and wiped the sweat off his bald head. There were four lumberjacks also sitting there waiting for the train. They all had pack sacks and two of the men had tools wrapped in burlap sacks. Their tools consisted of a broad ax, a cedar saw and sometimes an ordinary two-bitted ax. The broad ax was used for hewing railroad ties. These two lumberjacks with the tools were known as piece makers. The other two men could have been teamsters or maybe just plain drifters going from camp to camp sampling food.

Now those four men had two quarts of whiskey that they were sharing and they were feeling very happy. Of course Grandpa started talking to them and was told that they were going as far as Channing. Someone was to meet them there and take them to a lumber camp somewhere in that area. One of the men then took off his shoes and socks and reached into his pocket and took out his pocket knife and began to trim his toenails. He wasn't very dainty about it either – there were shavings flying all over the place.

Now I noticed that the people were starting to gather closer to the tracks. Grandpa got to his feet when we saw the gates being lowered across the street. At the same time I saw the train in the distance.

We were all set with our packages when the train pulled in. Just like before, the conductor got his black box all set up. There were a lot more people getting off and on the train than there had been at Randville. As I got onboard I took one last look at everything.

1912 HORSE & BUGGY RIDE FROM FELCH TO IRON MOUNTAIN

By Walter Mattson

[Transcribed and Edited by William J. Cummings]

Taken in about 1912, this view of the Anderson & Johnson General Store (Peter O. Anderson and Gust A. Johnson), located at 600-602 East Main Street on Iron Mountain's North Side, boasted four delivery wagons. By 1892 Gabardi Brothers (A. and G.) operated a meat market at 600 East Main Street, followed by Johnson & Anderson by 1902. By 1905 the firm Anderson & Johnson sold general merchandise and ran a meat market here, and selling general merchandise by 1907. By 1913 the address was 600-602 East Main Street.. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

Grandpa chose to sit in a seat very close to the door so that he would not have to move too far to get off. The lumberjacks sat across the aisle from us. As the train started to move slowly through the city, I stood and looked out the window for one last look at all those sights. There were all the horses and wagons – all the pigeons and sparrows and I couldn't help think what a paradise it would be for a sling shot. And of course there was the Main Street on the North Side. To this day that is a very important street as I have relatives and close friends who live close to that street. I took one more look at the high brewery building when we went by.

The train was beginning to move a lot faster. I knew that it would not be too long before we would be back at Randville. The four lumberjacks were noisy and they were passing their bottles around. Grandpa even took a little nip. Two of the men gave me fifty cents in change. I was doing all right! I had almost twice as much money in my pocket as

I had in the morning when I left home. You may be sure that is the only time that ever happened. Many is the time since then that I've been flat broke or damn close to it.

I didn't look for an open window. I just sat next to my Grandpa and cleaned some dirt off my corduroy pants. They were a little wrinkled but there was no pigeon juice on them. It was a quiet return trip in comparison to the trip to Iron Mountain earlier in the day. I was glad to just sit and think of all the wonderful things that I had seen and done that day.

CHAPTER VIII

When we got to Randville, Grandpa and I were the only ones to get off the train. Mr. Carney was there and he walked back to the barn with Grandpa while I ran into the saloon to get some more licorice. My brothers were waiting for my return and I knew they would both want some. When I ran into the barn Billy was all harnessed and ready to go. I patted him on the nose before I crawled up onto the buggy. He shook his head as if to say he was glad to see us.

I removed the jackets from under the seat where we had put them and put the packages in their place so they would not get too dusty. Grandpa crawled up into the buggy – filled his pipe and after giving Billy a drink of water we were headed for home.

The sun was really beating down on us. You could see the heat waves hanging over the sandy road. I was not near as peppy now as I was in the morning. Grandpa had his feet crossed, in their usual position, and he seemed quite comfortable. I knew that the trip home was going to be pretty rough on him.

As we were going along a few partridge flew up from the side of the road. They had been dusting in the warm sand. I was getting very sleepy. I was looking at the front wheel go round and round. Grandpa reached over and pulled me close to him. He kept his arm around me so that I would not fall off the seat. I know I fell asleep and slept for quite a while because when I woke up we had already passed the old mine. Billy was making one of his "pit stops" and Grandpa was smoking his pipe and crossing and uncrossing his feet. You could see he was anxious for the ride to be over with. I sure would have like to help him in some way but there was not a thing I could do.

We saw a man with a team of horses and a load of hay. This man was giving his horse a drink of water and we stopped to talk to him for a little while. He gave Billy a drink too. That Billy still seemed to be in good shape considering the heat and all the dust. He was sure a good horse!!

1912 HORSE & BUGGY RIDE FROM FELCH TO IRON MOUNTAIN

By Walter Mattson

[Transcribed and Edited by William J. Cummings]

Four men – Salem Kasen, Herman Gustafson, Iver Kasen and William Gustafson – worked pressing hay and loading it into the hayloft in 1919 on the Andrew Gustafson farm at Metropolitan. The children seated at the top of the stacked hay bales were Wilma Nieland, Robert and Myrtle Gustafson. Seated below them were Regina Gustafson and Dorothy Wickman. Thora Gustafson was climbing while Frieda Gustafson was standing. [Beatrice Blomquist]

We were now getting close to the Sturgeon River and the big hill. This time I was not afraid to cross the bridge. Grandpa told me it would be easier on Billy if I would get out and walk up the hill. This lightened the load a little. He also had me pick up a chunk of wood that was lying by the road side. Whenever Billy stopped to rest I would put the block of wood under the front wheel to keep the buggy from rolling back. We helped Billy all we could and when we finally got to the top we let him take a long rest.

I crawled back up into the buggy and we plodded along slowly. Billy was rocking his head from side to side. The sun wasn't as high or as hot anymore. As we neared the old school house near home I put a stick of licorice into my mouth. There were some of my friends playing in the school yard and I took my straw hat off and waved it at them.

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By Walter Mattson

[Transcribed and Edited by William J. Cummings]

J.B. Fry was running the Metropolitan Hotel by 1888, when Felch Township was still a part of Marquette County. Fry continued as the hotel's proprietor until at least 1895. John J. Ovist acquired the building between 1903 and 1906, operating a general store. The store retained the name Metropolitan Store even after the settlement took the name Felch in the latter part of the first decade of the twentieth century, when this postcard photograph was taken. Ovist sold his business to Carl A. Carlson, John Blomquist and Iver Blomquist in late March or early April, 1916. They operated the business under the name of the Felch Supply Company. In later years employees lived in apartments upstairs. Axel Branback was the last occupant. Note the horse tied to a post, patiently waiting while his owner purchased the supplies needed at home. [Leona Coppo]

We could now see the barn and Billy's head popped up and he was holding it high and moving a little faster. When we pulled into the barnyard, Mr. Blomquist and some of his boys were there to meet us. I gave them some of my licorice.

While Grandpa was being helped from the buggy, I was giving good old Billy one last pat on the nose. He was led to the water tank and had a good long drink of water. Meanwhile I handed Grandpa his cane and he began to move around slowly. I put my jacket on, picked up the package of yarn and started off down the road to Grandpa's house.

I was anxious to show my Grandma my new hat. I didn't tell anyone what the pigeon had done to it – that I did not want anybody to ever know about.

As I was walking down the narrow path across the field from Grandpa's house to my house, I could see my two brothers coming to meet me. My oldest brother took the bundle of yarn from me and carried it home. I gave them each a stick of licorice and they were happy.

My Mother was standing in the orchard waiting for me. We all sat down on the front porch and I told them all about my first trip to Iron Mountain and about all the nice things that I had seen in the stores.

The next day Grandpa came over and wouldn't you know he had to open his mouth and tell everyone about the pigeon incident. I was pretty embarrassed!

CHAPTER IX

Many times after that I made trips to Randville with a horse and buggy. As I got older and a lot of local girls were working in Chicago, I was always elected to go to Randville to meet the train when they came home to visit. I made many trips in the winter time with a team of horses and a sleigh. This was standard equipment on a farm in those days. Even as the automobile came out it was kept in a garage during most of the winter months.

EPILOGUE

I know that many of you "old-timers" remember those good old horse and buggy days. I'm sure it is almost impossible to make the younger generation believe how it really was. It was a lot of fun at times – not always easy though.

Maybe it would be fun to go back to those horse and buggy days again – at least for a couple of trips to town. The way everything looks to me the passenger trains and maybe even the horses will be back again some day *[sic – someday]*. Who knows?

Remember though, if you decide to travel by train today, you had better pack a big lunch. You may have to wait a long time in Randville for the next passenger train.

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John P. Mattson Family

By Gerda (Mattson) Clark, daughter of John and Ida Mattson.

John P. Mattson was born in Forsby, Finland, December 4, 1871, and died June 19, 1939, at the age of 68 while a resident of Metropolitan. Ida Timmer was born in Nykarlevy, Finland, May 18, 1882, and died March 28, 1937, at the age of 54.

1912 HORSE & BUGGY RIDE FROM FELCH TO IRON MOUNTAIN

By Walter Mattson

[Transcribed and Edited by William J. Cummings]

They both came to this country at an early age. They married in 1904, settling in Milltown for a few years before moving to Farmertown where they had a home built next to our grandparents, the Gust Timmers. There were ten children – five girls: Nina Falstad, deceased, Ellen Edberg, Margaret Pach, Marian Hunt, and Gerda Clark; and five boy: Carl, Walter, Elof (who died at the age of 2), Ellsworth, and Alfred. Only Walter is still living.

Dad worked in the woods and in lumber camps most of his life. As a child I remember how we waited for weekends so he could be home with us.

We lived a short distance from public school and only half a mile from our church. We were brought up in a Christian home. During the summer vacations we attended Swedish Bible School where we were taught to read and write in Swedish. We did speak Swedish at home with our parents. It was more of a "Swede-Finn."

Dad and Mom raised most of our own crops – potatoes and garden produce. We also had chickens and a few cows, so we did have our own milk and eggs.

There are not too many of us left – one brother, Walter, still lives up in Farmertown. We four girls – Ellen, Margaret, Marian and I (Gerda) – still go up to the old home.

There are many fond memories…we still like to hear the frogs in the springtime, having their springtime rehearsal.

[*Felch Township 1878 to 1978, Felch, Michigan, Centennial Book*, by Beatrice Blomquist, Historian, Editor and Coordinator, Norway, Michigan: The Norway Current, 1978, page 227]

1912 HORSE & BUGGY RIDE FROM FELCH TO IRON MOUNTAIN

By Walter Mattson

[Transcribed and Edited by William J. Cummings]

The Andrew Rian family posed for the photographer in front of the Rian Hotel in Metropolitan (now Felch) in their three-seated waghon in about 1902. Olaf, Anna and Minnie Rian are seated in the front seat. Mr. and Mrs. Andrew (Anna Beseth) Rian are seated in the middle with Gilbert. Mr. and Mrs. Martin (Mary Beseth) Rian are seated in the back seat. Andrew Rian and Martin Rian were not related, although both came from Borsa, Trondheim, Norway. Andrew's first wife, Anna Rosvold, died in mid-October, 1899, before the construction of the hotel was completed. Note the turned posts and spindles used to form railings and decoration on tehhotel's porch and balcony. [John Aune]

1912 HORSE & BUGGY RIDE FROM FELCH TO IRON MOUNTAIN

By Walter Mattson

[Transcribed and Edited by William J. Cummings]

This view of the Erick Johnson farm, located in Princeton, serves as an example of the "good" farmland that greeted the settlers in Felch Township. Cut-over lands were sold cheaply to those people who remained in the area after the Metropolitan Lumber Company sawmill closed. Taken in 1919, this farm became the Fabian Steinbrecher potato farm, where championship Russet Burbanks were grown. [Beatrice Blomquist]