

C LUDINGTON SHAFT OF CHAPIN MINE COLLAPSES ON JULY 27, 1999

[Transcribed by William J. Cummings]

The Daily News, Iron Mountain-Kingsford, Michigan, Volume ____, Number ____ [Wednesday, July 28, 1999], page 1, columns 1-5

Ground collapses at Cornish Pump

By DONNA-MAE B. RAUCH
Staff Writer

IRON MOUNTAIN – Officials are monitoring a huge cave-in discovered Tuesday outside the Cornish Pumping Engine and Mining Museum on Kent Street.

The museum is the only building evacuated at this time. The streets around [the] complex – Fairbanks and Kent – are not closed.

Groundskeeper Keith Burcar discovered a rapidly expanding hole in the lawn on the building's north side at about 1 p.m.

Within a few hours, the hole developed into a gaping cavity an estimated 50 feet in diameter and thought to be upwards of 1,400 feet deep. The depth of the original Ludington C shaft at the former Chapin mining operation in the late 1890s was 1606 feet, according to museum board member Harry Kleiman. [sic – C Ludington Shaft opened in 1908 and was 1,522 feet deep.]

More ground and lawn continued to disappear today from the museum complex in 25 Location.

Kleiman believes the cause of the cave-in is directly related to the amount of rain this year.

"The rains saturated the ground," he said. "The ground became like liquid plastic and started moving.

Iron Mountain has received nearly 10 inches of rain in July. The Upper Peninsula has received far more rain than normal, according to a spokesman from the National Weather Service in Marquette.

"June had more amounts of rain, but July is about six inches above normal," he said.

More rains are expected in a storm system approaching from the west in the next 48 hours, he added.

That news will not please museum officials, quickly moving artifacts from the complex to safer ground.

Mike Carey, on hand with two crews from Carey Contracting, said he could feel the ground's movement Tuesday.

"The earth would shake," he said of chunks of lawn and dirt tumbling into the abyss. Carey crews installed storm fencing near the headframe; a cyclone fence was being installed today to keep onlookers away from the danger zone.

Carey is concerned that an extension on the building that covers the arm of a single piston rod will be affected by the cave-in. The extension, while it rests on a concrete foundation, is over a portion of the shaft. If the dirt supporting the foundation slips into the depths of the ever-widening shaft, the concrete foundation will drop.

Damage to the north wall of the 80-by-70 foot housing structure is possible, according to Carey. If the extension falls off the steel wall, some of the sheets installed by Smith Metal Structures, Inc., in late 1982 may peel off the building.

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Until the ground stops disappearing, museum authorities can do little but monitor the situation.

"More slabs have broken off since yesterday," Kleiman said this morning in talking to Dickinson County Mine Inspector Frank Santini.

Santini attributes part of the problem to the lack of proper capping at the mine site when the shaft was dismantled prior to World War II. The sinking soil is flowing into the drifts off the main shaft, he said.

"The shafts closed in the Norway area after the war were better done," Santini said.

A proper capping would be to cut a toe into the ledge and pour a solid slab, he explained. "You have to go to bedrock, anchor steel rods to the bedrock and make a permanent cap," he said.

The cave-in is shaped like an ice cream cone with the top much wider than the bottom.

"It looks like the banks are getting stabilized," Kleiman said, adding that he is concerned about the possibility of more rains.

Groundskeeper Don Chiapusio said that perhaps a makeshift berm at the western edge of the property could be constructed to keep run-off away.

Board members spent Tuesday and today contacting state officials looking for direction to obtain funding for repairs.

Mike Gokey, Gov. John Engler's Upper Peninsula representative in Marquette, said his office was contacted by Michigan State Police 8th District Emergency Management Director Tom Mattioli.

"We're keeping apprised of the situation," Gokey said.

The museum board will meet on Friday to evaluate the situation.

The Menominee Range Historical Museum on Ludington Street in Iron Mountain is not affected by the Cornish Pump closure, according to officials.

Designed and built in 1890, the Cornish Pump was the largest steam-powered pump of its time. It was capable of removing 3,000 gallons of water per minute from a depth of more than 1,500 feet underground.

The museum opened in 1983.

CAPTION: MIKE CAREY OF Carey Contracting of Iron Mountain examines a sink hole at the Cornish Pumping Engine and Mining Museum. Carey crews installed storm fencing Tuesday near the headframe of the former mine shaft. A cyclone fence was being installed today to keep curious onlookers away from the danger zone. An extension of the building, shown at right, rests precariously on a concrete foundation. The cone-shaped hole is thought to be upwards of 1,400 feet deep. [Theresa Peterson/Daily News Photos]

CAPTION: ORIGINAL PLANS FOR the Cornish Pumping Engine and Mining Museum reveal an extension of the building (circled), which is now in danger. The extension, resting on a concrete foundation, is over a portion of the shaft. Officials fear that if the dirt supporting the foundation gives way, the concrete foundation will drop. [Daily News File Photo]

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[Wednesday, July 28, 1999], page 1,
columns 4-5

Stay away, officials warn

IRON MOUNTAIN – Authorities are concerned that those curious about the cave-in at the Cornish Pump museum could get into trouble if they get too close.

The area is being fenced off to keep onlookers away from the Kent Street complex.

The hole is upwards of 1,400 feet deep, according to museum officials.

“This is a very, very dangerous place for people to go,” said Peter Schlitt, Dickinson County emergency management director. “If someone were to fall in, the potential to rescue anyone alive is very slim.”

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Fifty-fourth Year, Number 102
[Saturday, April 11, 1998], page 6,
columns 1-6

Henry Ford II's Blunder gave birth to Kingsford Chemical

By ROBERT GREDE
For the Daily News

KINGSFORD, Jan. 12, 1995 – Think about the president of your company for a moment.

If [*sic – Is*] he approachable?

Would you be comfortable disagreeing with his decision? If not, you may be among the most dreaded of all employees.

The “Yes Man” (or “Yes Woman”). Typically, the larger your company, the further removed your leader becomes from day-to-day operations and the loftier his position seems.

He evolves into a symbolic corporate figurehead – almost godlike in his pronouncements and decisions. He also becomes a prisoner of his own triumphs in a world where no one will disagree with him about anything.

And that can hurt his business, whether he knows it or not. My father tells me the story of such a man – Henry Ford II, grandson of the great Henry Ford, who invented the assembly line and founded Ford Motor Co. In 1923, Henry Ford established a body assembly plant outside of Iron Mountain and named in [*sic – it*] Kingsford [*sic*].

His purpose was to be near the Ford forests throughout the Upper Peninsula. Those forests supplied wood used for floorboards, door frames, and roof supports in Model T cars.

After World War I, steel replaced all wood in the Model T. But Ford engineers – aiming to make use of their forests – designed an upscale Model A that resembled a truck. They called it a “station wagon,” but many people referred to it as a “Woody” because of its fancy wood sides.

In 1946, Grede Foundries of Milwaukee built a gray-iron metal-forging facility directly across the street from Ford's Kingsford plant. It became Grede's Iron Mountain Division. By 1953, the Woody

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had faded into history, and Ford used almost no wood in any of his vehicles.

The decision was made to close Ford's Kingsford operation. At the time, Ford's vast holdings dominated the countryside. The Kingsford operation consisted of 14 assembly buildings, a maintenance building, a charcoal plant, a steam generating plant, a chipper/sawmill building, an airfield, a waterworks, and a hydro power plant and dam. Henry Ford II, then chief executive officer of Ford Motor Company, donated the airfield and water works to the city of Kingsford.

The remainder of the property he listed for sale. My grandfather, Arthur L. Grede, then executive vice president of Grede Foundries, bought the Ford property. My father, Ned Grede, worked as a salesman for Briggs & Stratton Corp. at the time.

When his father invited him to attend the final purchase negotiations, he arranged to be in Kingsford on the appropriate date.

There, my father was introduced to Henry Ford II and also met the Kingsford plant manager and several other Ford executives. They included the plant's maintenance supervisor, with whom my father sat.

At one point during the final negotiations, Mr. Ford turned to the plant's maintenance supervisor and said, "I want to keep the plant on our regular maintenance schedule right up to the date of closing," which was scheduled for five months later. Obviously taken by surprise, the supervisor gulped.

"Yes, sir, Mr. Ford," was all he said. After the signing, the supervisor agreed to show my father the property.

As they were walking, my father asked why he had seem *[sic – seemed]* to *[be]* distressed when Ford told him to keep up the maintenance schedule.

The supervisor told my father that he could understand maintaining the property and even replacing the roof on one of the buildings, which was scheduled for the following month.

But he said he was amazed that Mr. Ford wanted him to take delivery on a brand new diesel locomotive just five days before turning the plant over to its new owners. The new locomotive had been scheduled, as part of the maintenance schedule, to replace an engine being retired after 20 years of service.

The locomotive manufacturer was Fairbanks Morse of Beloit, Wis., and the cost was over \$100,000 (in 1954 dollars). My father was shocked. He asked why the maintenance supervisor hadn't mentioned the locomotive to Ford. "Me contradict Mr Ford?" he replied. "No, sir." My father knew that Art and Bill Grede had no plans to use the railroad, which ran between the plant and the Ford forests.

After my grandfather was informed of the locomotive, he made a deal with Fairbanks Morse to deliver the engine to another customer (Fairbanks Morse had a backlog of orders at the time). Fairbanks Morse also found a buyer for the old locomotive that Ford had planned to retire.

Art and Bill Grede sold the Ford hydro plant to Wisconsin Michigan Power Co., retained 750 acres of land (more than a square mile), and lease *[sic – leased]* out most of the buildings.

With the money they received from selling the two locomotives and the hydro

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plant, the Grede brothers were able to keep the charcoal plant operational. It became known as the Kingsford Chemical Co., which began bagging charcoal briquettes for sale to an exploding population of suburbanites wanting fuel for their outdoor barbecues. (Kingsford was later purchased by the Clorox Co. in the early 1970's.)

There is a moral to this story. Henry Ford II loomed so awesome to his employees that they were afraid to disagree with him, suggest alternatives or improvements, report bad news or every address him directly.

His detached demeanor encouraged silent reverence and discouraged constructive criticism.

Had Ford solicited the opinions of subordinates, he would have made a much better deal on the Kingsford property. Instead, he was allowed, in ignorance, to make an expensive blunder. As a result, the Kingsford [Chemical] Co. was born.

CAPTION: Ford Charcoal Briquets bags [Menominee Range Historical Museum Photo]

CAPTION: Some of the greatest minds in the world visited the Iron Mountain-Kingsford area. Shown in this August 1923 photo are, from left, Henry Ford, Thomas Edison and E.G. Kingsford. The three and their families were on a camping trip here. They were accompanied by Harvey P. Firestone, founder of the Firestone Tire Co. They traveled in a caravan that included three Lincoln cars, two Lincoln supply trucks and a White pantry car. According to early reports, Edison was "commander in

chief" of the journey and mapped the route. [Michigan Historical Museum Photo]

The Iron Mountain News, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume ____, Number ____ [Monday, October 30, 1939], page ____, columns ____

Services For Mr. Richards Tomorrow

Funeral services for William Henry Richards, aged 77, prominently associated with the early mining history of the community and who died at 11:25 a.m. Saturday [October 28, 1939] at his home, 1200 Grand boulevard, will be held at 1:30 tomorrow afternoon at the residence and at 2 o'clock at Holy Trinity Episcopal church.

The Rev. George Weiser, pastor, will conduct the services and burial will be in Cemetery park.

Mr. Richards' death marks the passing of another pioneer citizen who, arriving in Iron Mountain 52 years ago, saw the community grow from a mining settlement to its present development.

Born In England

Mr. Richards was born May 27, 1862, in Cornwall, England, and in his life he worked for more than 60 years in coal and iron mines in England, Scotland and Michigan. He retired on a pension several years ago after working for 43 consecutive years and eight months in the Chapin mine in this city, as miner and pumpman. Others may have worked longer in one property, but few have challenged the record.

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He was "Billy" to all who knew him, and he and Mrs. Richards came to Iron Mountain from Yorkshire, England in 1887. He went to work at the Chapin and stayed there until the Oliver company, a subsidiary of the United States Steel corporation, placed him on the pension list.

That, oddly enough, was not a particularly happy day for Billy Richards. He didn't want to quit. He felt he had many more years of usefulness. But orders were orders, and Billy took one last look at the familiar surroundings of the old pump house, stepped in the cage and was raised to surface – never to go down again.

Kept Busy

Although not actively employed since then, Billy Richards kept busy about the house, raising pedigreed poultry and maintaining his garden. He made daily trips to town and there were frequent reunions with old partners in the mine. Billy's birthday was always the occasion for a social gathering at his home and an exchange of reminiscences.

Billy Richards was only nine years of age when he took his first mining job, as trapper boy in an English pit. In those days horses pulled loaded ore cars out of the drifts to a central shaft, and it was Billy's job to hold the horse at the mouth of the drift, out of harm's way. He was paid an even shilling for 10 hours' work underground – about 25 cents in American money.

He advanced to the rating of full-fledged miner and then pumpman. He knew every foot of ground in the Chapin and could recount many experiences in his long years of service there. In all his 60 years of mining he lost only three months through

illness, and another 14 days of lost-time from an injury.

Observed Golden Wedding

Mr. and Mrs. Richards observed their fiftieth wedding anniversary five years ago. They were wedded December 9, 1883, in Lofthos, Yorkshire, England.

Besides his widow, six sons and four daughters survive. They are William, Jr., John, Clarence, James, Fred, Mrs. James Mitchell and Mrs. Stephen Williams, all of Iron Mountain; Thomas, of Iron River; Mrs. E.A. Croll, of Orlando, Fla., and Mrs. L.J. Boyer, of Moline, Ill. A brother, John, resides in California, and a sister, Mrs. Beatrice Thomas, lives in this city. There are 29 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Mr. Richards was a member of the Sons of St. George Lodge.

The Iron Mountain News, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume ____, Number ____ [Tuesday, November 13, 1945], page ____, columns ____

Mrs. Richards Died Monday At Her Home

Mrs. Mary Ann Richards, 81, a resident of Iron Mountain for close to 60 years, died at 9:30 last night [November 12, 1945] at her home, 1200 Grand boulevard. She had been sick a year.

Mrs. Richards was the widow of the late William Richards, employe [sic – employee] of the Chapin mine for many years and retired on pension before he died a few years ago.

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Born Jan. 10, 1864, in Brotton, England, Mrs. Richards came to this country when a girl, and arrived in Iron Mountain when it was a small mining community.

She leaves six sons, William, John and James, Iron Mountain; Thomas, Iron River; Clarence, East Chicago, Ind., and Fred, Appleton; four daughters, Mrs. James Mitchell and Mrs. Stephen Williams, Iron Mountain; Mrs. E.A. Croll, Orlando, Fla., and Mrs. J.L. Boyer, Moline, Ill.; a brother, William Dodds, living in England; 29 grandchildren, and 13 great-grandchildren.

Services will be held at 2 Thursday at the residence and at 2:30 at Holy Trinity Episcopal. The Rev. James Ward, Escanaba, former Iron Mountain pastor, will officiate. Burial will be in Cemetery Park.

The body, prepared for burial at the Buchanan-Villemur-Tondin Funeral home, was taken to the residence, where it may be viewed, at 4:30 this afternoon.