

DICKINSON COUNTY HISTORY – INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

[Compiled and Transcribed by William J. Cummings]

IRON MOUNTAIN FURNACE & CHEMICAL COMPANY

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 24, Number 45 [Thursday, April 1, 1920], page 1, column 5

FURNACE ASSURED

Iron Mountain Citizens Will Invest \$175,000 in the Enterprise.

Last Saturday evening, a dinner was served to about one hundred business men [*sic – businessmen*] at **The Milliman Hotel**. The meeting was held for the purpose of receiving a report from **M.E. Richards** relative to the **erection of a modern charcoal iron furnace and chemical plant in Iron Mountain**, to be operated in connection with the **West Chapin Mine**.

Mr. Richards, in explaining progress in promoting the company, stated that the opportunity was now ripe for the citizens of Iron Mountain to invest – no donations were asked – in an enterprise that was certain to be a success and certain to return large dividends on the money invested. Outside capitalists were no certain that a furnace erected at Iron Mountain would prove a good money winner that they were ready to invest a [*sic*] \$500,000 in the enterprise.

Speeches were made by **Messrs. Fox, Unger, Garvey, C.H. Baxter, John Daprato, Captain Spencer** and other citizens – all of an enthusiastic nature – in which it was urged that the proposition advanced by Mr. Richards be accepted.

The enterprise meant the **investment of more than a million dollars in Iron**

Mountain and employment the year around for more than five hundred men. As one gentlemen [*sic – gentleman*] expressed it: The stock was better than government bonds and was certain to return about three times the interest, at the present price of charcoal pig iron and chemicals. There was a sufficient supply of charcoal wood under option to last the plant more than thirty years. Iron Mountain has the money and it was the opinion of all present that the \$175,000 would be forthcoming.

The meeting resulted in the appointment of a **financial and soliciting committee** composed of **John M. Garvey, C.H. Milliman, Andrew Bjorkman, Festus C. Cole, Hon. John Daprato, Isaac Unger and Louis J. Will**.

This committee is now at work. Plans are being formulated for a campaign that will stir good old Iron Mountain to the roots. The plan includes a mass meeting of all citizens. And all citizens should be there. Be a booster.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 24, Number 46 [Thursday, April 8, 1920], page 1, column 6

FURNACE EXPERT COMING.

Will Address Citizens at Milliman Hotel Next Saturday.

F.C. Cole, C.M. Milliman, John M. Garvey, Isaac Unger and Louis J. Will, of the **Commercial club**, accompanied by **Capt. John T. Spencer and Thomas Wills**, of the **West Chapin Mines company**, spent last Monday in **Marquette**.

The trip was made for the purpose of counseling [*sic – counseling*] with one of the

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best authorities on **charcoal iron blast furnaces** in the United States.

The gentlemen returned home more enthusiastic than ever relative to the success of the enterprise, and the further fact that it will prove a larger paying proposition than Mr. Richards had predicted. The gentleman declared that Iron Mountain was an ideal location for a charcoal furnace and chemical plant, operated in connection with the West Chapin. He was confident that the success of the first furnace would lead to the erection of others and kindred plants.

The committeemen are primed with facts and figures, but have refused to divulge any of the information until next Saturday evening, when another dinner will be held at the **Milliman**. The furnace expert will be the guest of honor at the dinner and will assist the committeemen in fully informing citizens regarding the assured success of the enterprise.

The Press has been requested to state that no citizen is barred from these dinners. They are strictly informal and each fellow pays for his dinner. So come along and help Iron Mountain over the hill. If you intend being present, it might be well to telephone Messrs. Milliman for a table reservation.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 24, Number 52 [Thursday, May 20, 1920], page 1, column 5

MEET TO ORGANIZE

Furnace and Chemical Co. Stock Subscribers Meet June 1st.

The **Iron Mountain Furnace and Chemical company** will be organized on

Tuesday afternoon, June 1st, at a meeting of stock subscribers to be held in the council chamber, city hall building.

The meeting is called by **Messrs. Garvey, Cole and Bjorkman**, the members of the committee in charge of the organization, as representatives of the **Iron Mountain Commercial club**.

At this meeting the subscribers to the stock of the company will elect a board of directors, adopt by-laws and transact such other business as may come before the meeting.

In order to participate in the organization of the company, the subscribers must pay ten per cent of their subscription before noon of the meeting day. Payments may be made at either the **First National Bank** or the **Commercial Bank**, in the name of **John M. Garvey**, who has been named trustee for the subscribers. Subscribers will be allowed one vote in the meeting for each share of stock on which he has paid his first installment. The remainder of the amount subscribed is payable in nine equal monthly installments as the board of directors may prescribe.

As soon as possible after an organization has been perfected, application will *[be]* made to the state utilities commission for a charter. This is certain to be granted and the company will be in shape to do business in a very short time. The capitalization of the company has not been determined as yet. It may be \$500,000 and it may be considerable *[sic – considerably]* more than that sum. Iron Mountain people were allotted \$175,000 worth of stock at a time when it was proposed to organized with a capitalization of \$400,000 for the erection of a charcoal blast furnace exclusively. Iron Mountain people responded with subscriptions exceeding \$250,000, and since then it has been proposed to add a modern chemical plant to the enterprise. The operations of

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the proposed company must be enlarged or the stock subscriptions of citizens reduced. It is understood that, in order to meet just such a condition as this, the promoters of the company have secured an option on a chemical plant that could be re-erected in Iron Mountain at about half the cost of a new plant. The price is due to the fact that, *[sic]* the company now operating the chemical plant, *[sic]* has about reached the end of its timber resources.

The location of the furnace and chemical plant has not been decided upon definitely. However, as the plant will need considerable water in its operations the **site near Crystal Lake is most favored**. The location, however, is immaterial. The large fact is that it will be located in Iron Mountain and that construction work will start within the next few weeks.

The Daily Tribune-Gazette, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Forty-Ninth Year, Number 110 [Friday, May 21, 1920], page 1, column 1

STATEMENT ON CHARCOAL IRON FURNACE

A meeting of the **furnace committee** was held at the **Milliman hotel** last evening after which the following statement was given out for publication, which explains itself:

THIS AGREEMENT, made and entered into this twentieth day of May 1920 by and between **John T. Spencer**, representing the **West Chapin Mines Co.**, and the Committee having in charge the organization of the proposed **Iron Mountain Furnace and Chemical Co.**, WITNESSETH, that Whereas John T.

Spencer has represented to the said Committee that the establishing of a furnace in the city of Iron Mountain, as originally intended, was for the purpose of operating the said West Chapin Mines Co., and developing said mine in connection with said furnace and whereas the idea of the Committee was to use all ore possible from said mines, and whereas there is a difference of opinion as to the advisability of going ahead with the furnace in accordance with the plans of the West Chapin Mines Co., Now therefore the said committee finding it impossible to proceed in harmony under present conditions, hereby agree to allow the said John T. Spencer, thirty days from the date hereof to organize a furnace company, or to build a charcoal iron furnace in accordance with plans developed by the West Chapin Mines Co., and the said John T. Spencer in consideration thereof, hereby agrees that in the event he is unable to raise the funds in accordance with said plans, within the said thirty days, then the said John T. Spencer is to withdraw all opposition to the plans of the Committee and give them a free hand to go ahead in accordance with plans as worked out by experts.

It is further agreed that the said Committee shall have the right to be the sole judge, as to whether after an investigation of the progress made by the said West Chapin Mines Co., within the said thirty days, the amount necessary to build said furnace can be raised by the said West Chapin Mines Co.

It is further understood that this agreement postpones the payment of all subscriptions heretofore made during the said period of thirty days.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the said parties have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

J.M. Garvey (L.S.)

L.J. Will (L.S.)

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C.H. Milliman (L.S.)
Andrew Bjorkman (L.S.)
John Daprato (L.S.)
John T. Spencer (L.S.)
For West Chapin Mines Co.

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The Furnace.

While The Press is not able to give particulars, we can state that **the erection of a charcoal furnace by the Iron Mountain Furnace & Chemical company in Iron Mountain is more certain now than at any time since the inception of the project.** If the good people will only wait patiently for a short time, they will have full particulars. It can be said, however, that the enterprise has been fully financed.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 25, Number 11 [Thursday, July 29, 1920], page 1, columns 1-2

FORD INDUSTRIES

Will Be Located South of City on the Mongrain and Schintgen Farms.

It has been **definitely decided to locate the several mills and factories of the Ford Motor company on the Mongrain and Schintgen farms, just east of Carpenter avenue and about a mile south of the city limits.** The engineers of the company are now engaged in making the surveys for the several buildings

preparatory to the starting of work on the foundations. During the week considerable building materials have arrived here for the company. The consignment included concrete mixing machinery and a dozen or more carloads of cement.

The work of building the spur track to the site was commenced last Tuesday. The switch connection was made by a crew of men employed by the St. Paul road under the supervision of **Roadmaster Dunn.** **John Marsch** has the contract to build the spur track and will do considerable other work for the Ford company. One of his grading outfits and two carload [*sic – carloads*] of horses and mules arrived here last Monday. **Nicholas Nerenhausen** will have charge of the work with **Fred Brasky** as cashier and both gentlemen are in the city.

The **Ford Motor company has purchased** from Mrs. [*several words missing here*] the [*word missing here*] **property on the south side of 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.

A gentleman who is in a position to know not a little about the plans of the Ford Motor company makes the prediction that, ultimately, the corporation will occupy the entire 3,000 acres of land that has been purchased and will employ several times 2,000 men. In the opinion of this gentleman the Ford company will manufacture all the parts of the Ford car, including the sheet steel, in Iron Mountain, except the motor. It is also predicted that the company includes in its general scheme additional sawmills. As this gentleman tells us, if the mills are located in Iron Mountain there will be no "log waste," as would be the case if the

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mills were located in the timber belts. All the slabs could be utilized, even to the smallest fragment, for fuel purposes.

It is safe to say, too, that the Ford Motor company at no distant day will explore the lands recently purchased for iron ore, and in the opinion of geologists a number of mines will be developed. This will lead to the erection of furnaces and sheet mills, and as it has been the policy of the Ford company to concentrate its activities, it naturally follows that Iron Mountain is the logical site for them.

The Ford Motor company owns – or will own when the Iron Mountain plant is in operation – all the raw materials entering into the construction of Ford cars except iron ore. Large fields of Kentucky coal were recently purchased by the Fords and they have also purchased a railroad over 440 miles long – extending from Detroit through the coal districts of Ohio, West Virginia and Kentucky, thus insuring them an everlasting supply of high grade fuel. When all the interests are connected up, the Ford Motor company will be dependent upon no interest for raw materials.

The coming of the Ford Motor company, with its large land requirements, has interfered temporarily with the plans of the Iron [Mountain] Furnace & Chemical company and may regard the erection work. This plant was to have been erected on the lands which M.J. Fox purchased several months ago from the late H.M. Pelham and Mrs. A.C. Cook, located in the Crystal Lake district. These lands were needed to round out the Ford holdings and they were sold to the company with a guarantee that the Furnace & Chemical company would be provided with an equally as good a site by the Ford Motor company. A site will be selected in the near future. It can be said that the erection of the furnace and chemical plant is

absolutely certain. The enterprise has been completely financed. A large block of stock has been taken by a company engaged in the furnace and chemical business and several large lumbering concerns are also heavily interested. This latter connection insures a supply of charcoal wood for many years to come.

It can be said, too, that **John T. Spencer** and associates have by no means abandoned their furnace plans and are more confident of success today than ever before. The Press hopes that Mr. Spencer and his associates will have every success in floating their enterprise. Iron Mountain cannot have too many furnaces. Mr. Spencer has won success in other undertakes [*sic – undertakings*], almost single-handed, where complete failure was predicted by many.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 25, Number 14 [Thursday, August 19, 1920], page 1, column 6

Erection Postponed.

A meeting of the several interests who are to unite in the organization of **the Iron Mountain Furnace and Chemical company** with a capital stock of \$1,000,000 was held in Chicago yesterday. Among the interests represented were the **von Platen-Fox company, Cleveland-Cliffs Iron company, J.W. Wells Lumber company, Boniface Lumber company, Wisconsin Land & Lumber company** and the **Sawyer-Goodman company**. After discussing conditions from all viewpoints it was deemed advisable to **postpone erection work until spring**. In the meantime complete arrangements can be made for the necessary materials.

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Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 25, Number 24 [Thursday, October 28, 1920], page 1, column 5

Furnace & Chemical Co.

M.E. Richards, of the **Iron Mountain Furnace & Chemical company**, tells The Press that there is absolutely **no truth in the report that his company has abandoned its projected plant**. Mr. Richards states that the present inactivity is due to unsettled business conditions throughout the nation and world and the inability to place favorable delivery contracts for the materials needed in the erection of the plant. **The company, as has been related in these columns, has purchased the Carlson farm, adjacent to the von Platen-Fox mill, upon which to erect the plant, and the sum of \$27,000 was paid for the lands.** Some of the largest interests in the upper peninsula – including the **Cleveland-Cliffs Iron company** – have become, *[sic]* associated in the enterprise and there will be no lack of funds to finance the enterprise. This does not mean that Iron Mountain people will not have an opportunity to buy stock in the company if they so desire.