

DICKINSON COUNTY HISTORY – VON PLATEN-FOX LUMBER COMPANY

[Compiled and Transcribed by William J. Cummings]

Von Platen Started a New Era for Iron Mountain By Putnam W. Robbins

*[Born From Iron: Iron Mountain, Michigan
1879-1979, pages 74-76]*

Edward G. Kingsford, timber cruiser and surveyor, and his brother, Frank, owned a large farm on South Stephenson Avenue. They sold their farm and homes to the Von Platen Lumber Company in 1910-11. In 1911 the Von Platen Sawmill started operations in Iron Mountain with M.J. Fox, superintendent of mill and logging operations. This was the first large two-band hardwood sawmill in the area, and it opened the market for millions of board feet of hardwoods left by the "pine loggers" in the Iron Mountain area. The farmers within sleigh haul distance of the mill cleared most of their remaining hardwood lands and delivered their logs via sleigh haul to the mill. At this time and until the mill closed the Northwestern Railroad kept two steam switch engines and crews busy spotting carloads of logs which arrived daily, from North and West via "wayfreight" trains.

The largest logging operation near Iron Mountain in the 1920's was by the J.W. Wells Company of Menominee, supervised by Wells E. Hallenbeck, of West "B" Street, when they logged east of Sagola. They owned their railroad which started at LaCourt Spur on the Milwaukee Road between Randville and Sagola and extended east for about 12 miles, with many more miles of side spurs. In 1922 when Putnam W. Robbins scaled logs for them at Camp 10, the Wells Company had facilities for 125 men at Camps 10, 12 and 14. At Camp 10 ten teams of horses skidded logs to landings on spurs from the main line during the summers and sleighs

hauled the timber from great distances back during the winter.

At Camp 12 the Wells Company used a "Lidgerwood" steam skidder, which with real steel cables running from its high boom, pulled in tree length logs from approximately a quarter mile from the landing. The logs were loaded full length on special flat cars used only by the Wells Company. All small train loads of logs were hauled to LaCourt Spur where they were picked up by Milwaukee trains. At Camp 10 the company maintained a "round house," water tank and siding for their two locomotives, a "Shay" and a "Baldwin," and equipment for the section crew.

Von Platen-Fox Company

*[Born From Iron: Iron Mountain, Michigan
1879-1979, page 76]*

VonPlaten-Fox, one of the biggest names in Upper Peninsula's lumber and logging era, was a leading industry in Iron Mountain. The sawmill and lumber yard opened in 1910 and employed 300 men during the peak of operation. During those years, Von Platen-Fox spent more than \$35,000,000 here and about 35 per cent of it went into wages.

For years the Von Platen-Fox sawmill and huge lumber yard was the landmark entrance to Iron Mountain from the south. The lumber yard was bordered by Stephenson Avenue on the east, "H" Street on the north, Cedar Avenue on the west and Cemetery Park on the south.

The follow excerpts were taken from a paper written by M.J. Fox in 1931:

"During 1893 I applied for a job driving horses in his (Von Platen) lumber yard as he was the only one who was paying cash in the community. I was turned down. Later on, I worked in his yard at Boyne City,

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Michigan, shoving lumber on boats, receiving 25 and 30 cents per hour and working in between times, putting in pile bottoms, for which I received \$1.12 ½ per day.

“June 30th, 1900. I was hired as an assistant foreman. The first thirty days I put in on a log boom, it rained thirty days and thirty nights. My wages were \$1.50 per day, which was more than I was worth. Finally I took charge of Mr. Von Platen’s business at Boyne City, Michigan, for ten years. He was taken sick and did a great deal of traveling all over the world. I was left in charge of his men and small business – a single circular mill, butting about ten million feet a year.

“In the year 1900 he purchased 12,000 acres of timber on the C & NW Railroad in the vicinity of Saunders and Pentoga, Michigan. In the year of 1910 we commenced looking for a site to build a plant. The whole project was built around me. He said if I would not stay and operate the plant he would sell the timber. We located in Iron Mountain twenty-two years ago. Our locating here and operating here is a familiar story to you all and it is needless to go into detail. Our plant has operated almost continually since its starting up on November 28, 1910. Most of the time night and day.

[“]The personnel of the people of Iron Mountain and their willingness to raise approximately \$15,000 at the time of our coming here, the excellent railroad facilities and the wonderful spirit manifested by men like E.F. Brown, O.C. Davidson, Andrew Bjorkman, R.S. Powell, Isaac Unger, L.T. Sterling and other people interested, was one of the many inducements that made us locate at this point. The first point was – the wonderful railroad service; second – the close proximity to the timber, and third – and foremost, was the cheap tax rate at that time, as I recall, it was about \$2.17 per

hundred. Our plant was started and carried on under the name Von Platen Lumber Company.

“The starting of a new industry in an Iron Community was somewhat harder than we thought it might be on account of the labor not being accustomed to doing our type of work. However, time changed the whole program, and we have had a most excellent crew of loyal men and women.

“Our company as it is today – Von Platen-Fox Company – was organized in 1920 and in that year we purchased the Ayer Tract of timber – 172,000 acres. A “back-log” to Iron Mountain, to your property and ours. For a sawmill without timber is like winter without snow.

“In December, 1924, Mr. Von Platen died in St. Luke’s Hospital in Chicago. Since then, I have had his load to carry as well as the load of the company, which has been a pleasure and a duty.”

Mr. M.J. Fox died in 1941 and was succeeded by his son, Abbot, who became president of the company. In 1943, due to the scarcity of timber in the area and the long transportation haul to bring in timber, it was decided to go into partial liquidation and close the Iron Mountain Mill. During the 33 years of existence here, the company and Mr. M.J. Fox, personally, donated generously to many civic and charitable causes in the community.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 14, Number 43 [Thursday, March 17, 1910], page 1, columns 1-2

CHANCE TO BOOST

IRON MOUNTAIN HAS OPPORTUNITY TO SECURE FACTORIES.

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May Ultimately Employ Four Hundred Hands; Business People of the City Must Aid Project.

In compliance with an invitation extended by Messrs. Richard S. Powell, Isaac Unger[,], W.J. Cudlip and A.E. Brauns, about fifty business men [*sic* – *businessmen*] assembled at the club rooms of the Order of Elks last Friday evening for the purpose of meeting Godfrey von Platen, of Boyne City, Mich., and his manager, M.J. Fox.

Richard S. Powell acted as chairman of the meeting, which, while informal, was very earnest.

Mr. von Platen, upon being introduced, stated that he was desirous of locating a large band saw-mill [*sic* – *sawmill*] in Iron Mountain, but in order to successfully float the enterprise it was necessary to secure concessions from the several railroads in the way of freight rates on logs manufactured stock east and west. 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. Mr. von Platen and associates own large tracts of hardwood timber along the North-Western road and he intimated that other tracts would be secured tributary to the St. Paul and Wisconsin & Michigan roads.

While he made no pledges, Mr. von Platen declared that the building of the saw-mill [*sic* – *sawmill*] would lead to the erection of a large hardwood flooring factory, employing nearly two hundred men and boys, at an early date.

He also informed his hearers that, if a favorable freight rate was secured on rough

cordwood, he had every reason to believe that the flooring mill would be followed within the next two years by a large chemical plant and charcoal iron furnace, employing several hundred additional men. Indeed, Manager Smith, of similar institutions of Boyne City, had promised to erect the plants, if the freight concessions were secured from the several railroads.

Mr. von Platen asked no concessions from the people of Iron Mountain in the way of taxation or a bonus. All he wants is the assistance of the people in securing the desired freight rates and some temporary help in closing the deals for the site.

The site he has in view is the farm of Edward G. Kingsford, to the south of the city. This farm contains about one hundred and sixty acres and is admirably located for manufacturing plants, the three railroads tapping the property – the North-Western on the east, the St. Paul on the west, and the Wisconsin & Michigan tracks going directly through the farm.

Provided the railroad companies grant the desired freight rates – and the request is not an unreasonable one – the proposition that will confront the people of Iron Mountain is this – Form a Commercial association for the purchase of the Kingsford farm for the sum of \$20,000. This price includes the two residences and other buildings worth fully half the purchase money. Mr. von Platen already has an option for thirty days on the farm. The association will then sell Mr. von Platen forty acres for which he agrees to pay \$6,000. He will also purchase the buildings, provided a reasonable price is placed on them. He also desires an option for two years on the remainder of the land, with the idea in view of selling the same to the capitalists who propose building the blast furnace and the chemical works.

The proposition, boiled down, means that the people of Iron Mountain, in order to

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secure industries employing between three and four hundred men, will invest for a period of not more than two years, about \$12,000. Should the chemical works and furnace not materialize, a question of little doubt, the subscribers to the fund or association will be the owners of a tract of nearly one hundred and twenty acres of farming lands within the city limits for which they have paid \$12,000[.] The land could be subdivided into small farms or city lots and sold for more than \$12,000. At least this is the opinion of conservative judges of real property values. One forty could be reserved for a driving park and fair grounds. The property is splendidly located for such a purpose, and such an institution would yield a rich return to our city. It would be possible to induce other factories to come here.

The question of freight rates will be known definitely within the next twenty days. If the conclusion is favorable, the option on the farm is certain to be closed. There should be no “ifs” or “ands” about it. As one gentleman remarked at the meeting, “If Iron Mountain cannot raise \$12,000 in order to secure enterprises employing several hundred men we should go hang ourselves!” And the gentleman is right.

In order to take advantage of every circumstance that may arise, should quick action be desired, the meeting named a committee of five to co-operate [*sic – cooperate*] with Mr[.] von Platen, acquaint citizens with the project, and call another meeting when the railroads are heard from. This committee is composed of Messrs. W.J. Cudlip, Z.P. Rouselle, Andrew Bjorkman, Henry G. Neuens and Isaac Unger.

This committee was also empowered to suggest plans for the organization of a Commercial club similar to ones at Menominee and Marquette. There is great need of such an organization in Iron

Mountain. At present there is a great lack of sympathy among the business men [*sic – businessmen*][.] The Press fears that we are too predisposed to “knock.” There seems to be a lack of unity and, we fear, we are not a congenial lot. The Press does not intend delivering a lecture on this topic at this time. The need of a business man’s [*sic – businessman’s/businessmen’s*] organization must be manifest to all. We can only urge that when the opportunity to join such an organization is present to the business men [*sic – businessmen*], we earnestly hope that all will affiliate enthusiastically. There should be no laggards in a movement of this kind. It is time to boost for Iron Mountain.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 14, Number 44 [Thursday, March 24, 1910], page 1, column 3

TO WIN FACTORIES

RAILROAD COMPANIES TO GRANT THE FREIGHT CONCESSIONS.

And Mr. von Platen Decides to Build His Mills in the City; Furnace and Chemical Works Sure.

Godfrey von Platen, the capitalist, has been successful in securing the desired freight concessions on logs and lumber from the several railroads.

It is now up to the people of Iron Mountain to “make good” in the matter of raising the money necessary to conclude

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the deal for the purchase of the Kingsford farm.

That the people will not lose this opportunity for securing manufacturing establishments employing several hundred men can be stated as as *[sic]* an assured fact.

Yesterday, Messrs. Bjorkman, Cudlip, Neuens, Unger and Rousselle, the committee appointed at the recent citizen's *[sic – citizens']* meeting circulated a stock subscription list and in a few hours secured pledges aggregating over \$8,000. Many leading firms and individuals have not been called upon as yet, but they will not be discriminated against.

The money will be raised and Iron Mountain will win the factories[.]

There is no chance for a loss.

A company will be formed. The stock will have a par value of \$10.00 per share. Capital, \$20,500[.] Mr. von Platen will pay \$6,000 for the forty-acre tract he desires for his saw-mill *[sic – sawmill]* and factory. Also, a snug sum for the two residences and other buildings. This will leave the company with 120 acres of excellent farming lands as a capital stock, at a cost of about \$12,000[.] The lands will be employed in bringing in a blast furnace and chemical works – already assured – the projectors of which will pay the land company full value for the desired sites. Thus our city will have gained three manufacturing establishments by the simple process of loaning a few thousand dollars for a few months.

When the good work becomes an accomplished fact[.] the committee should proceed with the organization of a strong Commercial club[.] We should not *[sic – no]* longer lose sight of the fact that Iron Mountain, with her magnificent water powers and excellent railroad connections, is the best located town in the upper

peninsula for manufacturing establishments of all kinds.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 14, Number 44 [Thursday, March 24, 1910], page 3 column 4

BRIEF CITY NEWSITES.

Godfrey von Platen and M.J.[.] *[F]ox*, who contemplate erecting the large saw-mill *[sic – sawmill]* and flooring factory in this city, returned to the city last Friday for Chicago, where they had been in consultation with railway officials relative to rates on timber and lumber.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 14, Number 45 [Thursday, March 31, 1910], page 5, column 3

FACTORIES VERY NEAR!

Mr. von Platen Will Be Here in Few Days to Sign the Papers.

Iron Mountain, as was predicted by The Press, has been successful in landing the Godfrey von Platen industries and the deal for the Kingsford farm will be closed, it is now anticipated, before the close of the week. But a small balance of the amount needed remains to be subscribed[.]

The business men *[sic – businessmen]* and citizens in general responded magnificently to the appeal of the committee to subscribe for stock in the proposed Commercial association, which will acquire title to the farm, and it is safe to

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say that the balance will be secured in a day or two.

The fellow who said that Iron Mountain people were lacking in enterprise will please go away back and hide himself and take with him the other fellow who said that Iron Mountain people could not unite on any project.

Mr. von Platen was expected in the city last Tuesday to close the deal, but important business matters elsewhere detained him. He will arrive before the close of the week, it is now stated.

The plans for the large band saw-mill [*sic – sawmill*] will be [*m*]ade at once and it is expected that the work of erection will commence before the close of April.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 14, Number 48 [Thursday, April 21, 1910], page 1, column 5

THE DEAL TIED DOWN.

Mills of von Platen Interests Will Be Erected on Kingsford Farm.

It can now [*be*] published as a fact that the mill industries of Godfrey von Platen and associates will be located in Iron Mountain.

This means the immediate erection of a large double band saw-mill [*sic – sawmill*] to be followed later by a large hardwood flooring mill and other industries.

The committee of citizens having the matter in charge succeeded in solving all of the many difficulties with which they were confronted during the last few days and before the close of the week the property transfers will have been made.

The property involved is the farm of Edward S. [*sic – G.*] Kingsford[,] containing

about one hundred and sixty acres and five and a fraction acres purchased from A. Spies, of Menominee. The price paid for the Kingsford farm is \$20,800 and for the Spies acreage \$2,500. Regarding the latter transaction The Press will make suitable comment later.

Mr. Fox, the representative of Mr. von Platen, assures The Press that work on the mill will commence within the next few weeks.

The site secured is an ideal one for almost any kind of an industry. It is trapped by three railroads – the North-Western, St. Paul and the Wisconsin & Michigan. A good supply of water is at hand and the factories are assured of fire protection from the water works of the city. Everything considered, no city in Michigan could offer a better site.

Mr. von Platen is satisfied and we believe that Iron Mountain people will have every reason to be satisfied.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 14, Number 51 [Thursday, May 12, 1910], page 1, column 5

Preparing Mill Plans.

“I have come to stay with you,” was the salutation The Press received from M.J. Fox, manager of the von Platen interests. Mr. Fox arrived in the city last Monday and was accompanied by H.A. Benedict, of Boyne City. Mr. Benedict is an architect and millwright and he will prepare the plans for the Iron Mountain plant, commencing work at once. Work on the site will also commence forth with [*sic – forthwith*]. The mill, as has been stated in The Press, will contain two band saws and the accompanying machinery. Particulars regarding the dimensions of the mill

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buildings are not obtainable at this time. Mr. Fox expects to bring his family to Iron Mountain as soon as the health of Mrs. Fox's mother will permit.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 15, Number 1 [Thursday, May 26, 1910], page 1, column 5

Work on Mill Site.

The first work on the von Platen hardwood plant was performed under the direction of Manager Fox last Friday when a small crew of men commenced clearing the grounds preparatory to the erection of the buildings. Architect Benedict is now at work on the mill plans and as soon as possible the work of erection will commence. It is expected to have the saw-mill [*sic – sawmill*] plant in operation early in the fall.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 15, Number 6 [Thursday, June 30, 1910], page 8, column 3

M.J. Fox, manager of the von Platen lumber interests, has arrived from Boyne City with his family and is now a citizen. He is welcome.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 15, Number 10 [Thursday, July 28, 1910], page 6, column 1

BRIEF CITY NEWS.

Work has commenced on the concrete foundations for the new saw-mill [*sic – sawmill*].

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 15, Number 11 [Thursday, August 4, 1910], page 1, column 2

Progress at the Mill.

The work of erecting the timbers for the main building at the von Platen mill is now in progress and the people may gain a general idea of the dimensions of the plant. The mill proper is one hundred by forty feet in size and is erected on concrete foundations. It has been decided to materially enlarge the capacity of the mill and it will contain two band saws and a gang [*saw*], making it one of the largest in the peninsula. A force of about thirty carpenters are [*sic – is*] employed in the work of erection.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 15, Number 15 [Thursday, September 1, 1910], page 8, column 3

Rushing the Work.

The main building of the G. von Platen Lumber company is nearly enclosed with a large force of carpenters rushing operations. The main building is about 120x40 on the foundations. Several consignments of machinery have been received with more coming nearly every day. The company has started one logging camp, which will insure a supply of timber as soon as the mill is ready for operation.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 15, Number 17 [Thursday, September 15, 1910], page 1, column 6

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PROGRESS AT THE MILL

Company May Erect Planning *[sic]*, Flooring and Single Mills Soon.

The von Platen interests are more than making good their pledges to the people of Iron Mountain.

The work of erecting the main mill building is being rushed under the direction of Manager Fox. This building is fifty-two by one hundred and fifty feet on the foundations, two full stories in height and is a most substantial structure.

The boiler and engine-house is now in course of construction. The dimensions are forty-eight by seventy-two feet. The power plant will consist of an engine of five hundred horse-power *[sic – horsepower]* and a battery of three boilers seventy-two inches by eighteen feet each in size. The foundation is also being prepared for a fourth boiler, which will be erected as soon as the additional power is needed.

The saw-mill *[sic – sawmill]*, when fully equipped, will contain two band saws and a gang *[saw]*, with steam feed and a steam setting apparatus, and a steam log roller, making it one of the largest in the upper peninsula.

One band saw will be erected at once and the others as soon as possible. The capacity of the mill when it starts operations will be 30,000 feet of lumber in ten hours, but when all the machinery is in place the capacity *[sic – capacity]* will be about 80,000 feet per day.

Manager Fox tells The Press that a force of forty men will be employed in the mill and yard during the winter months, but in the spring and summer the number will be more than doubled.

The company has one logging camp in operation eight miles from Saunders on the Lake Shore division of the North-Western. Forty men are employed in the camp now. It is expected to cut 5,000,000 feet of logs at this camp during the winter and ship direct to the Iron Mountain mill. It is the intention to build a logging railroad and start additional camps in the spring. Logging will continue throughout the year.

The company now has under considerations plans for greatly enlarging operations at an early date. It is certain that a large planning *[sic – planing]* mill will be erected in the spring and an extensive flooring factory and shingle mill may also be added to the plant at that time.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 15, Number 19 [Thursday, September 29, 1910], page 8, column 4

The pipe has been received for the extension of the water mains to the plant of the von Platen Lumber company. The line will be about thirteen hundred feet long and contain three fire hydrants. The work will be done by the company under the direction of Supt. Croll.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 15, Number 21 [Thursday, October 13, 1910], page 1, column 4

SATISFACTORY MEETING.

Stockholders of Realty Company Approve Actions of Officers.

A meeting of the stockholders of the Iron Mountain Realty company was held last Tuesday at the council rooms. Thirty

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stockholders, holding a majority part of the stock, were present at the meeting. The stockholders ratified all the actions of the trustees. The report of the treasurer showed that there is about \$2,500 in cash in the treasury, and this amount will be left in the treasury until some further action of the stockholders is taken.

Messrs. Bjorkman, Evans and Powell, composing the board of directors, tendered their resignations, which the stockholders refused to accept and the present officers will remain.

All of the stockholders expressed themselves as being greatly pleased with the work done by the von Platen interests. It is hoped that within the next few months two or three additional plants will be started on lands of the company.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 15, Number 25 [Thursday, November 10, 1910], page 1, column 4

FATALITY AT THE MILL.

Small Derrick Capsizes and Adolph Wahlstrom is Instantly Killed.

Adolph Wahlstrom was almost instantly killed at the von Platen mill last Tuesday shortly after the dinner hour. Wahlstrom, who held the position of yard foreman, was superintending the work of unloading some logging machinery from a railroad car. A small derrick was employed in the work. A large wheel was being removed from the car when the derrick upset. In falling the arm struck Wahlstrom directly on the head fracturing the skull and breaking his neck. Before the noon hour a similar wheel had been lifted from the car with the derrick and

all the men employed with Wahlstrom considered it safely anchored. At an inquest held yesterday afternoon the coroner's jury returned a verdict of accidental death. Wahlstrom was about twenty-one years of age and a young man held in high esteem. Manager Fox, of the mill company, speaks strongly of his worth. Wahlstrom was in charge of much of the erection work at the mill and was considered highly efficient in this line of duty. The funeral will be held Saturday afternoon at two o'clock from the Swedish Mission church.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 15, Number 25 [Thursday, November 10, 1910], page 1, column 5

WHEELS TO TURN SOON.

Expected von Platen Mill Will Operate Early in December.

Manager Fox, of the von Platen Lumber company, informed The Press yesterday afternoon that he expected to have the big mill in operation early in December – before the fifteenth.

A force of forty men will be employed in the mill proper during the day run. Manager Fox, however, anticipates operating the plant day and night, which means active employment for eighty men.

The company has several camps in operation and is assured of a steady supply of timber. Considerable timber has also been purchased from operators along the St. Paul road.

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Number 28 [Thursday, December 1,
1910], page 1, column 3

SAWS TO SAW SOON

FIRE STARTED UNDER BOILERS OF SAW-MILL ON THURSDAY.

Logs Are Now Coming from Camps and Saws Will Commence Buz- zing on the 15th – Bully!

Manager Fox, of the von Platen Lumber company[,] informed The Press last Tuesday afternoon that he fully expected to have the big saw-mill [*sic – sawmill*] in operation on or about the 15th of this month – two weeks from to-day [*sic – today*].

Fires were started under the battery of boilers for the first time last Thursday morning and they were found flawless. There are three boilers in the battery[,] each eighteen feet by seventy-two inches in size and the foundation has been constructed for a fourth one.

The first consignment of logs is due to arrive during the week from the company's camp near Saunders. The com- [*sic – company*] is employing about forty men in its logging operations and will cut about 5,000,000 feet, shipping direct to the mill. In addition to this stock, the company has purchased several million feet of hardwood logs from Warren Flanagan and other jobbers along the St. Paul road.

The mill and other buildings will be lighted with electricity and the work of wiring is now in hand. A dynamo having a capacity of 600 16-candle-power lights has been installed. There will be 200 hundred [*sic – two hundred*] lights in the mill building.

The buildings are very substantial structures. The mill is a frame structure with concrete floors and steel roof. It is fifty-two by one hundred and fifty feet on the foundations and two full stories in height. The engine-house [*sic – engine house*] is of concrete construction, forty-eight by seventy-two feet in size, and in addition to the boiler plant houses the engine of 500 horse-power capacity.

The saw-mill [*sic – sawmill*], when fully equipped, will contain two band saws and a gang [*saw*], with steam feed and a steam setting apparatus, and a steam log roller, making it one of the largest in the upper peninsula. One band saw will be operated at once and the others as soon as possible. The capacity of the mill when it starts operations will be 30,000 feet of lumber in ten hours, but when all the machinery is in place the capacity will be about 80,000 feet per day.

The plant is splendidly located and is already connected with the North-Western, St. Paul and Wisconsin & Michigan railways by spur tracks, giving the company unequalled shipping facilities.

Manager Fox is now engaged in organizing his working forces and proposes to favor local labor wherever possible. During the winter months about forty men will be employed, but in the spring the force will be more than doubled.

While no conclusion has been reached to date, it is known that the company has in view the erection of a large factory for the manufacture of hardwood flooring, a planning [*sic – planing*] mill and a shingle mill. These proposed additions to the plant means the employment of many more men.

It is becoming more evident every day that Iron Mountain people made no mistake when they induced the von Platen interests to locate in the city.

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Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 15, Number 32 [Thursday, December 29, 1910], page 1, column 6

At the Saw-Mill.

Manager Fox, of the von Platen Lumber company, tells The Press that he expects to commence operating the big saw-mill [*sic – sawmill*] with a night crew early in the new year. This means an expansion of the working force from forty to eighty men. The machinery is running smoothly, but no effort is being [*made*] to crowd the saws at this time, and the day shift cut is about 25,000 feet. Logs are now arriving at the mill daily over the Chicago & North-Western road.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 15, Number 34 [Thursday, January 12, 1911], page 1, column 6

Day and Night.

The saw-mill [*sic – sawmill*] of the von Platen Lumber company will commence next Monday operate night and day, Manager Fox, so informing The Press. This means an addition to the working force of forty men, making the total number on payroll [*sic – payroll*] over eighty. Logs are now arriving from the company's camps in Iron county and from camps of jobbers along the St. Paul road. Running day and night the cut of the mill will be increased to about 80,000 feet.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 15, Number 46 [Thursday, April 6, 1911], page 1, column 4

DAMAGE SUIT COMMENCED.

Heirs of the Late Adolph Wahlstrom Against von Platten [*sic – Platen*] Company.

The heirs of the late Adolph Wahlstrom, who was killed last November at the von Platten [*sic – Platen*] mill, have instituted a suit for damages in the sum of \$10,000. Attorneys J.H. Rushton and Judd Yelland, of Escanaba, will appear for the heirs.

Wahlstrom was employed in the capacity of foreman of a crew of men engaged in unloading some machinery from a car. A loading machine was employed in the work and had been placed in position under the direction of Wahlstrom, it was stated at the inquest. The load proved too heavy for the machine, the anchorage proving insufficient, and it toppled over on Wahlstrom crushing his head and causing instant death.

It is now alleged in the bill of the complainants that the proper safeguards were not provided by the company for the position in which the deceased was employed.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 16, Number 15 [Thursday, August 31, 1911], page 1, column 3

DOUBLE CAPACITY

MILL OF THE VON PLATEN LUMBER CO. NOW BEING ENLARGED.

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[Compiled and Transcribed by William J. Cummings]

Company Employing One Hundred in Logging Operations and Builds Six Miles of Railroad.

The capacity of the saw-mill [*sic* – *sawmill*] plant of the von Platen Lumber company is to be doubled at once, in accordance with the original plans of the management.

This means that another band-saw and other machinery will be installed. The additional equipment is being received and the work of erection is now progressing.

When the mill was erected, the buildings were planned for this increased capacity, but it was not expected to make the enlargement at this early date. The fact that the company has already found it necessary to double the capacity of the saw-mill [*sic* – *sawmill*] plant, [*sic*] is substantial evidence that, [*sic*] Iron Mountain[,] as a location for a lumbering plant, has proven satisfactory to the management.

The addition to the mill capacity will necessitate the employment of many more men. At present the plant is operated day shift only, but Manager Fox anticipates working the mill nights during the winter months.

While The Press does not speak advisedly in the premises, the enlargement of the capacity of the mill will no doubt lead to the erection of subsidiary industries at an early date. It is known that the company has under consideration the erection of a large flooring factory, shingle mill and dry house.

Notwithstanding the general dullness in the lumber market, the company is doing a satisfactory business and is in position to take advantage of the first improvement in general business conditions. Buyers are finding their way to the mill from many distant points.

Manager Fox left last Tuesday for the company's logging camps in the vicinity of Pentoga. The company owns a very large tract of mixed timber in that district, sufficient to keep their mill in operation for many years. During the summer months this belt of timber has been tap [*sic* – *tapped*] by a railroad extended from the main line of [*the*] Chicago & North-Western road. The line has a present length of about six miles, but when finished it will be 15 miles long. The company owns the locomotive, but the cars are supplied by the North-Western road. The logs are loaded directly on to the cars and the journey from the forest to the mill yard is only a matter of a few hours, comparatively. The von Platen company is now employing over one hundred men in its forest department.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 17, Number 40 [Thursday, February 20, 1913], page 1, column 5

Vote to Sell.

At a meeting of the stockholders of the Iron Mountain Realty company held last Monday it was voted to sell the balance of the Kingsford farm to the von [*sic*] Platen Lumber company. A committee was appointed to negotiate the deal. It is probable that the deal will be closed and that the Lumber company will utilize the balance of the acreage – about nine acres – in enlarging their operations.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 20, Number 10 [Thursday, July 22, 1915], page 1, column 5

A Machine Shop.

DICKINSON COUNTY HISTORY – VON PLATEN-FOX LUMBER COMPANY

[Compiled and Transcribed by William J. Cummings]

The von Platen Lumber company is now engaged in building a machine shop. It is being erected on the site of the old blacksmith shop, which was partially destroyed by fire recently. The building is twenty-four by sixty-feet on the foundation. In addition to the machine shop, the building will be equipped for carpenter work and blacksmithing. The company has also placed an order for a new surfacing machine for the planing mill.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 21, Number 14 [Thursday, August 17, 1916], page 1, column 4

Accident at Mill.

Arthur Lacousier, who was employed on a planer at the von Platen Lumber company, was struck in the eye by a splinter from a board. The fragment penetrated the eye-ball [*sic – eyeball*], which was badly lacerated. Dr. George A. Boyce, who attended him, removed the eye last Tuesday.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 24, Number 52 [Thursday, May 20, 1920], page 1, column 3

MILL STRIKE ENDS

Von Platen Plant About to Resume Work on Old Time Schedule.

The action of the majority of the members of the local union of mill men, in deciding to return to their work at the mills of the von [*sic*] Platen Lumber company, is most commendable. This decision was

reached at a meeting of the union held last Sunday and General Manager Fox, of the company, was at once informed of the action, and he was greatly pleased thereat. The men will return under the same conditions existing before the strike and Mr. Fox has assured the men that no one will be discriminated against. A considerable number of the men returned to work on Monday and it is hoped to have the entire plant in operation in a few days. Operations in the woods were resumed on Tuesday with a force of sixty men. The attempt to call a strike at the camps was a fizzle, but the closing of the mill necessitated a suspension of operations and a considerable number of the men, believing that the strike would be a lengthy one, sought work elsewhere. Now that work has been resumed, the men will no doubt return to the company's camps, where working conditions are said to be unexcelled as lumber camps go and wages are always a little higher than elsewhere.

The strike was a half-hearted one from the start and was due to a large measure to outside advice that should never have been heeded. The men were appreciative of the square deal they had always received from the von Platen company and of the ever-present interest which Manager Fox evidenced in the affairs of themselves and their families. They were also appreciative of the fact that the company was paying higher wages than any similar concern in this district. Notwithstanding[,] the local members of the union felt that they would be guilty of disloyalty to the mill men elsewhere, where conditions were not so amicable, did they not obey the call to strike issued at Rhinelander by a man personally unknown to a majority of them.

The strike has been a costly one as far as Iron Mountain is concerned. The loss in wages will exceed \$15,000 and the loss to the company has been much larger. Due to

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the strike, the organization of the Iron Mountain Furnace and Chemical company was delayed for several weeks and the Toronto gentleman who had intended erecting a hub and spoke factory here has decided to delay the commencement of the work. No doubt he will come later and the furnace company will soon be organized.

The Press is glad that the strike has come to an end. And The Press is also glad to record the amicable manner in which the strike was conducted and the amicable conclusion of the strike.

Another serious blow was delivered at one of the strongest points in the forces of the Timberworkers' union when 180 employes *[sic – employees]* of I. Stephenson company's plant at Wells deserted the union and returned to work on the ten-hour day basis and at the same scale of wages effective when the strike was called. This development is considered a most important indication of the general break-down of the strike, inasmuch as the union's strength was most noticeable at Wells, Manistique and Menominee.

At Manistique fifty union men returned to work at the Manistique Handle company's plant. It was the first break in the strikers' ranks at Manistique. The handle plant is now operating with a full force.

Mill operators in Wells and Manistique look for a wholesale return of men to their jobs this week and they believe that within the next few days the complexion of the strike will be decidedly changed in all places where men have been holding out.

The situation in the Menominee and Marinette district remained unchanged at the end of the second week, union leaders declaring that the men were still loyal to the organization.

After visiting Rhinelander and investigating strike conditions in that district, J.J. Barrett, representative of the United States department of labor, said it looked as though "the matter will have to be settled between employers and employes *[sic – employees]* themselves without outside interference." He had little to say about the strike except to remark that "both the operators and strikers seem to be firm in their positions regarding the eight-hour day."

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 25, Number 1 [Thursday, May 27, 1920], page 1, column 2

Strike Is Over.

The saws are again in motion at the mills of the von Platen Lumber company and every one *[sic – everyone]* is happy, but no one more so than General Manager Fox. The plant resumed operations in all departments last Monday with a full crew, nearly all the old hand returning to their former jobs. The strike is now a closed chapter. As Mr. Fox stated, no one has been discriminated against due to the strike. Business has also been resumed at the logging camps. At Foster City, the plant of the Morgan Lumber & Cedar company, closed for a few days, is again in operation with a full crew. The Sagola mill is still idle. At Manistique, the largest plant in the district resumed operations on the old schedule last Monday. The Stephenson company at Wells has several hundred men at work and has secured an injunction from Judge Flannigan restraining the members of the union from picketing the plant. At Escanaba and Menominee conditions are about the same as last week.

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Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 25, Number 8 [Thursday, July 8, 1920], page 1, column 6

A Car Shortage.

A car shortage is now threatening the industrial life of the community. The von Platen Lumber company is unable to secure cars to bring logs from the camps to the mills nor to ship lumber to the market. Last Monday, the company had no cars. At the camps two engine crews are idle most of the time. The supply of logs at the mill is an exceedingly limited one and unless conditions are remedied at an early date further curtailment will be absolutely necessary. The mining companies are also complaining deeply and bitterly of traffic conditions. At the Chapin the large stock-piles [*sic – stockpiles*] have hardly a dent put in them. Only one steam shovel is in operation. At other mines no stock ore is being shipped. A continuation of this condition may result disastrous this fall and winter. But let us hope for the best.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 25, Number 14 [Thursday, August 19, 1920], page 1, column 3

VON PLATEN - FOX

Company Has Been Incorporated With a Capital of \$2,500,000.

The articles of incorporation of the von [*sic*] Platen-Fox company, successors to the von [*sic*] Platen Lumber company, have been filed with the county clerk and the secretary of state. The company was

organized at a recent meeting held in Grand Rapids.

The capital stock of the new company is \$2,500,000 divided into 250,000 shares having a par value of \$10.00 each. The amount of capital subscribed is \$1,450,000 and amount paid in in cash is \$250,000, no part of which has been paid in other property. The existence of the corporation is placed at thirty years.

The incorporators named in the articles are Godfrey von Platen, Pauline von Platen and Karl G. von Platen, of Grand Rapids, and Merten [*sic – Merton*] J. Fox, of Iron Mountain, and the stock division is as follows: Godfrey von Platen, 71,050 shares; M.J. Fox, 36,250 shares; Pauline von Platen, 18,850 shares and Karl G. von Platen, 18,850 shares.

The officers of the company as now formed are:

President – Godfrey von Platen.

Vice-President – Miss Pauline von Platen.

Secretary and Treasurer – Merton J. Fox, of Iron Mountain.

Miss Von Platen and Karl G. von Platen are children of President von Platen.

The company is empowered to manufacture, handle, purchase, sell, exchange and deal in timber, timber lands, lumber and other wood or forest products.

The recognition of M.J. Fox in the new company will be pleasing news to the gentleman's very many friends in Iron Mountain nad [*sic – and*] throughout the peninsula. Mr. Fox was largely instrumental in inducing Mr. von Platen to locate his mills in Iron Mountain. Since coming here Mr. [*Fox*] has functioned as a citizen in a degree that has been highly beneficial to the city. He has been a valuable volunteer worker in every movement having the betterment of the community as its object – betterment from a business standpoint and socially. Not only

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was *[sic –were]* his services at the command of his fellows, but he has been a large contributor in a financial way.

The von Platen Lumber company is an asset to which we can point with pride. It is a large employer of labor the year around, pays the best wages of any lumber concern in the peninsula, and has a contented *[sic – contented]* and happy family of employes *[sic – employees]*.

Recently the company has added many millions of feet of standing timber to its holdings in the peninsula, which insures the steady operation of the plant for many years to come. And, too, it may lead to enlargements that will result in the employment of many additional men.

Iron Mountain Press, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 25, Number 30 [Thursday, December 9, 1920], page 1, column 2

TIMBER LANDS SOLD

Wells Co. Acquires an Extensive Tract from Von Platen-Fox

Porterfield-Ellis company, of Plato, Ontonagon county, has sold for the Von Platen-Fox Lumber company, of Iron Mountain[,] 8,640.17 acres of timber land, all of which is tributary to their railroad, to the J.W. Wells Lumber Co., of Menominee. The Porterfield-Ellis company has entered into a contract with the J.W. Wells company whereby they will log this timber and participate in the profits. This is the second large group of timber land that the poerterfield-Ellis company has handled this year. About 6,000 acres were transferred to the Northern Paper mills last year.

It is expected that it will take about eight years to remove this last tract and market it.

Iron Mountain News, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 1, Number 45 [Thursday, June 2, 1921], page 2, column 2

FIFTY CENT WAGE CUT AT VON PLATEN MILL

Effective beginning the first of this month, a reduction all around of fifty cents a day in the pay of employes *[sic – employees]* of the Von *[sic]* Platen-Fox mill is announced. It is due to the depression in the lumber industry.

The reduction places common labor at the von Platen-Fox mill at \$3.50 a day, a scale materially higher than prevails in most of the mills of the district. The percentage of cut is higher for common labor than for the skilled workmen, it is expected, because when wages were advancing the common labor was advanced more in proportion than the skilled workmen.

The von Platen-Fox mill is one of the few plants in the upper peninsula-northern Wisconsin area that has continued operations without a break through the period of depression. Such big organizations as the I[.] Stephenson company were entirely suspended for a period, and many mills that had not lost a shift in years were shut down.

The Iron Mountain, *[sic]* plant continued active because the resources of the company permitted it to carry the considerable load occasioned by piling up lumber during the period of slow sales and because it was desired to maintain intact the highly efficient organization at the mill.

While there is noted some slight improvement in the lumber industry, it still has a long ways to go before it is back to normal, but it is the consensus of opinion

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[Compiled and Transcribed by William J. Cummings]

among the lead-lumbermen that the trend is now upward.

Iron Mountain News, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, _____ Year, Number _____ [Thursday, January 17, 1924], page 6, columns 1-3

VonPlaten-Fox Company Is Doing Large Business; Has Many Men On Its Payrolls

Employs 300 Here and
450 in Woods; Manager
Looks Forward to Nor-
mal Prosperous Times.

Following a 10-day shutdown during which repairs are being made, operations at the von Platen-Fox mill will be resumed, probably Friday morning, it was announced today by M.J. Fox, manager. The company enjoyed a good year in 1923 and looks forward to a similar business during the next 12 months. It is one of the three chief sustaining industries of Iron Mountain, and one of the largest lumber operators in upper Michigan.

With the resumption of operations 300 men will be on the payroll here. The mill has been thoroughly renovated and machinery cleaned and repaired. A new re-saw is also ordered and will be installed within a few days.

Has Many In Woods.

The von Platen-Fox company is an extensive employer of labor in the woods. It is running six logging camps having a total complement of 450 men. In addition it has contracts with four jobbers who work 100 men. An indication of the size of its

business may be seen in the fact that it expects to log 35,000,000 feet of timber this year. Of this amount 6,500,000 feet has been disposed of to the Ford Motor company and other interests.

The company's woods equipment includes 70 teams, three locomotives and three 10-ton tractors. Its camps are models and provide conveniences and comforts for the men that were not known in the early days of logging.

On Two-Shift Basis.

The mill here will continue on a day and night shift basis "indefinitely," Mr. Fox declared. There is good demand for its product and sales outlets provide ready markets for the full production.

As a matter of fact, the von Platen-Fox mill has been probably the most steady operator in upper Michigan and northern Wisconsin. For months it has been running two shifts and during the period of depression in 1921 into 1922 when practically all other mills were closed down it kept operating in order to give its men employment.

Large Lumber Output.

The mill is by no means small as mills go. In 1923 it cut and shipped about 35,000,000 feet of lumber and this will probably be duplicated in 1924. It paid out in log freight rates alone during the last year the sum of \$90,000.

The von Platen-Fox and Ford mills combined have made Iron Mountain one of the largest if not the largest lumber producing center in both the states of Wisconsin and Michigan. Fourteen years ago the total output here per year was negligible.

Built 15 Houses.

The company has also carried on a sizeable construction program. It built 15 houses for its employes [*sic – employees*] and a boarding house accommodating 35 men during the last year. It erected a barn

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in which 20 teams of horses can be stabled, established a retail lumber yard and did various other things. In the spring it is contemplating further improvements, such as putting in a sidewalk along south Stephenson avenue near the plant office and has offered the free use of a grove in this district for a city park.

Labor conditions in the woods are about normal, according to Mr. Fox. Full forces of men can be secured and wage schedules are practically the same as last season. There is no big oversupply of woodsmen, yet, there is no shortage. Logging conditions have become well stabilized following the unsettled and abnormal labor situation during and immediately after the World war.

Looks For Normal Year.

A "normal" year in business is looked forward to by Mr. Fox. "Present indications are that there will be no ill effects from the fact that this is a presidential year," he declared. "The outlook is that the party in power will be returned and if this occurs there should be no reason for unsettled business conditions."

"I believe now that 1924 will prove much the same as 1923," he continued. "It will not be a year of abnormal and inflated prosperity nor should there be any great recession. Demand is normal and supply is about meeting it. Our general conditions are fundamentally sound. The steel business is good, rail business is fair, the condition of the farmers is improving and the automobile is here to stay. In connection with this last named industry it must be taken into consideration that the time has arrived when there will annually be a large number of cars scrapped and replaced with new machines. This is opening up a steady and dependable market for the manufacturers.

Seasonable Quietness Here.

"At present there is a seasonable quietness but there is no cause for alarm in this as the condition is a normal one. Men employed in lake shipping and other seasonable pursuits, for instance, are now laid off but when suitable weather arrives they will be put back to work.

"The big factor that is too often overlooked in judging business conditions in the United States and estimating increases that bring prosperity and good times is that this is a steadily and rapidly growing country. This means a constantly expanding market and a continuation of manufacturing operations to meet the demand. Figures show that in the 30 years from 1890 to 1920 the population of the United States increased from 62,900,000 to 105,700,000. The number of families having homes grew from 12,690,000 to 24,350,000. The number of people working at gainful operations rose from 23,300,000 to 41,600,000. The volume of business has also grown faster than the population.

"But this population increase alone and its accompanying trade demand in connection with the regular flow of business throughout the country should mean fairly steady but not abnormal prosperity generally among the people. In 1890 our population stood at 62,947,000 and showed proportionate growth with each additional census, the figures of 1910 being 91,972,000 and in 1920, 105,710,000. At this rate in 1930 the population should be 120,000,000 and reach 135,000,000 by 1940.

Trend Should Be Upward.

"Of course business periodically has declines and increases but the net results over a long space of time should be considered as showing the real trend. In the case of the United States this trend should be upward.

"Our company expects a normal year in business with practically normal conditions

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prevailing generally. We don't expect to see business go over that done in 1923; it will probably be about the same.

"Conditions in Iron Mountain are favorable. There is employment for those who want to work and the year should witness another large volume of construction, especially in home building.

"After all our common thought should be that we are working for each other and our problem is to adjust and regulate conditions so that all are employed. By cooperation and plain thinking we can accomplish much towards reaching this goal. Any deviation from the path or any attempt to skyrocket conditions and create fictitious good times merely invites disaster [*sic – disaster*]. In following well defined and safe courses the country is pursuing a policy that will bring the greatest benefit to all."

Iron Mountain News, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 5, Number 46 [Thursday, June 4, 1925], page 2, column 2

Teamster Drops Dead At Von Platen Camp

Edwin Haines, 48, of Menominee, dropped dead while driving a team of horses for the von [*sic – Von*] Platen-Fox Lumber company at a camp 22 miles from Iron River, according to word received here.

Haines had been in the employ of the lumber company as a teamster for many years and at the time of his death was driving from one camp to another.

Funeral services will be held tomorrow from the home of his mother in Menominee. He was unmarried.

Iron Mountain News, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, _____

Year, Number _____ [Saturday, November 30, 1940], page 10, columns 1-2

VonPlaten-Fox Company Observes 30th Anniversary

M.J. Fox, president of the von Platen-Fox Lumber company, tipped back in his office chair yesterday, gazed out over the sprawling lumber yard, and recalled that this month – November – marks the thirtieth anniversary of the company's establishment in this city. "But it doesn't seem that long," he added – "seems more like 30 weeks."

On Nov. 18, 1910, when the von Platen Lumber company opened its operations here, Iron Mountain was a city of 8,000 persons. There were four active iron mines, Traders, Chapin, Indiana and Pewabic, employing about 1,200 persons. Automobiles were still something of a curiosity, and truck and bus lines were unheard of. But railroads ran two more passenger trains into the city than they do today.

"It was the mines that brought us here," Fox said, "They kept things rolling."

Raised \$12,000

The mines and the fact that 183 citizens of Iron Mountain raised \$12,000 to loan the new industry, were decisive factors in attracting Iron Mountain's first sawmill.

"I'm proud of the fact that we paid off every loan within five years," the company president said. "I'd hate to think that any one [*sic – anyone*] had lost their money helping us."

He called in his secretary, who read from the list of men who had helped bring the company to the city. Many of the names are still current in Iron Mountain directories – Khoury, Sackim, Fugere, Alvar, Kingsford, Carlson, Olson, Johnson and others. The amounts ran from \$5 to

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\$500. There was a Catholic priest on the list, and the name of a Chinese laundryman.

The mill then known as “the little Red mill that belonged to everyone” – was just about as it is now. However, the office was in a building near the mill, and now used as a garage. The von Platen company didn’t need much space for an office at that time. There was only one clerk – a bookkeeper. Now there are 14 clerical employees to keep records on the four plants operated by the company.

Two “Charter” Employees

Arthur Carlson, the office manager, is the only present employe *[sic – employee]* – except Mr. Fox – who was in at the beginning of operations here. But there are several veterans on the payroll. The average length of service for employes *[sic – employees]* is 21 years, and 30 for key men still on the job.

Death has claimed many of the first employes *[sic – employees]* of the company, and others, like Fred Johnson, now superintendent of the Ford plant in Kingsford, and former von Platen bookkeeper, have gone on to other work.

Identified for many years as the von Platen Lumber company, Mr. Fox’s name was added in 1920. He has been active head of operations since the plant’s inception, and is assisted today by his son, Abbott M. Fox, vice-president.

Two other sons are associated in the business, Robert, in charge of the Chicago office, and James, at Two Rivers, where a Fox sawmill is situated.

Small Turnover

There has been little turnover, likewise, in mill employment. Many who started as young men years ago are still on the payroll.

During its 30 years of operations in the Upper Peninsula, the von Platen-Fox company has cut and sold 800,000,000 feet

of timber. Thirty-two million feet were cut last year, 16,000,000 feet in Iron Mountain, 8,000,000 in the Trout Creek mill, 7,000,000 at Mass and 1,000,000 at Basswood.

The biggest year’s cut was in 1924, when 64,000,000 feet were handled to save the timber after a forest fire struck 18,000 acres.

The von Platen company was active for 20 years in lower Michigan before the Iron Mountain mill was established, and the concern still deals with customers of a half-century ago.

THE VON PLATEN-FOX LUMBER COMPANY BURNED DURING THE SUMMER OF 1943 OR 1944