

# MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 18: EXTENDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM FLORENCE TO CRYSTAL FALLS FROM 1881 TO 1882

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian



Construction of the Crystal Falls extension of the Chicago & Northwestern Railway began May 30, 1881 under Superintendent George Runkel, finally reaching the new village in late February or early March, 1882. The depot was located on Superior Avenue, part way down the hill to the east. Postmarked October 28, 1915, this postcard view shows two passenger cars and two conductors, as well as a water tank in the background. A dray wagon waits ready to be loaded with items delivered to the city by rail, and an early automobile is parked on the other side of the horse. [William John Cummings]

[NOTE: Dates, placed chronologically, are highlighted in boldface red letters for easier reading, and names of individuals and places are highlighted in boldface black letters to facilitate finding information.]

The earliest mention of extending the Chicago & Northwestern Railway Company's tracks from Florence, Wisconsin, to the iron fields in what is now Iron County, Michigan, in a contemporary newspaper was copied from *The Menominee Range*, Quinnesec's

newspaper, in the **March 5, 1881** edition of Escanaba's *The Iron Port*, as follows:

### **Range Items.**

—We have it from quite a reliable source that the **C. & N.W. railway company** is making preparations to **extend their line to the Iron river country, and a branch from there to Ontonagon, and from that place to Houghton**, while the main line will be run to connect with the Northern Pacific. The course has already been mapped out. —Men. Range.

The **March 5, 1881** edition of Florence's new newspaper, *The Florence Mining*

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News, included the following item regarding extending the railroad to the west:

*We have credible information, that the **survey for the extension of the railroad from Florence, further west, will be commenced in a very short time. The survey will probably follow a westerly course to section 24, 40-17, and then deflect northward.***

A month later, the **April 9, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News* reported the **Chicago & Northwestern Railway's completed preliminary survey** of the area, as follows:

*THE **C. & N.W. Ry.**, [sic] have [sic – has] concluded to begin a preliminary survey from this place immediately. It was contemplated to commence surveying after the snow has disappeared, but orders have been received this week to begin right off. It will probably take all summer to establish the most feasible route to **Crystal Falls** and also to **Iron River**. Operations may be commenced on the road bed as early as next spring. The country is a rough one to run through, and a great deal of care will have to be exercised in the selection of the most economical route.*

The following week, the **April 16, 1881** edition of *The Iron Port* mentioned surveying work for the extension, as follows:

## **Range Items.**

*–The **C. & N.W. company** will proceed at once to determine the **route of extension north and west of its present terminus at Florence**, and there is every probability that the **iron region north of the Brule** will be reached by rail before the shipping season closes.*

*–**Mr. Palmer**, with a **surveying party**, went out [on] the branch, on Monday, to **run lines west and north of Florence for the extension of the railroad**. Authorities*

*differ as to what the company intends, but to an outsider it appears very plain that the **C. & N.W.** cannot afford to delay the **extension of its lines to Felch mountain [sic – Mountain], Crystal falls [sic – Falls] and the country west of the Paint and north of the Brule.***

The **April 16, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News* noted the beginning of another **preliminary survey emanating from Florence**, as follows:

*A **preliminary railroad survey** was commenced by the **C. & N.W. Ry company**, on Monday, **from Florence, northwesterly across the Brule river.***

*AT **Runkel et. Al.'s explorations**, near the ever beautiful **Crystal Falls** of the **Paint River**, six men under charge of **Capt. W.H. Morrison**[,] struck for shorter hours and liberty one day this week. Their places were filled instanter [sic – instantly], and the new men will have to work ten hours a day, or no pay. Such is the edict promulgated by the chief Kahn.*

Two weeks later, in the **April 30, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News*, two items appeared regarding the extension, as follows:

*TWO engineering parties are engaged in running **preliminary railway lines** under the charge of **S.H. Selden, Esq.**, between this point [**Florence**] and **Crystal Falls** on the **Paint River**. One corps of 12 men will work from the north end of the line, and another corps will work from this end. **Crystal Falls** are [sic – is] about 15 miles a little west of north from Florence.*

*THE surveying force of the **extension of the C. & N.W. Ry**, [sic] is being largely augmented by the arrival of men on the force. The intention of the management now is to run two preliminary lines. One to*

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*Iron River and one up the **Paint**.* [sic] Owing to the nature of the country through which it is proposed, by this company to build roads, it is presumable that the surveys will occupy the entire season.

Like *The Iron Port's* "**Racketty**" Clark and *The Mining Journal's* "**Wolverine**," *The Florence Mining News* began receiving reports from a mystery correspondent writing under the name of "**T.H. UNDER**."

A brief item appeared in the **May 7, 1881** edition of the Florence newspaper as follows:

*A VERY interesting communication will be found from our special correspondent at "**Camp Wild Cat**," on the C. & N.W. R'y survey. It is written in a fresh, vivacious style and gives a true and vivid picture of woods life. We are promised a succession of them.*

The first letter, written from **Camp Wild Cat** on **May 1, 1881**, appeared in the May 7, 1881 edition of the Florence newspaper, as follows:

*[From our own correspondent.]*

## **CAMP WILD CAT,**

*May 1st, 1881.*

*Why do we christen our forest home thus, do you ask? Give it up – or by the way, let me see, perhaps because that night before last, after we had all turned in, one of these "critters" surrounded our camp with repeated invitations to*

*"Come into the garden, Maude."*

*But we didn't come worth a cent, all good boys that stay in o'nights. Our camp is "**up the Paint**" about 13 miles from Florence, and 3 miles below Crystal Falls. We reached here in good order at noon 27th ult. [sic – of last month], with but one or two mishaps in the way of spill outs, occasioned*

*by the corduroys [roads constructed of logs], etc., on the way; one of our party being pitched from the wagon seat to the ground, landing upon all fours, but with out [sic – without] sustaining injury.*

*After storing away a hearty lunch, we set about hunting "corners," running random lines, etc., first direction being westerly to **Lake McMillan**, about one mile from camp, when it was found necessary to construct a raft before crossing, and it was while waiting here that one of those showers which come up uninvited and made to order, paid us particular attention, our only shelter being the trunk of a pine, each man for himself, and – well you know the rest; the shower was a mixture of rain and snow, and lasted long enough to give the party a pretty good wetting, and by the way, did you ever notice how handy a rubber coat is when you "don't vash got him already sometimes, ain't it?"*

*Well, our boat (?) was completed, and after the shower we returned to camp, to interview our rubber coats – and after exchanging wet garments for dry, we went out on the bridge to fish; catch anything? Well, it was like some kinds of hunting, plenty of it, keep you busy all day, but "nary a nib;" guess the fish this way are not partial to "sam handwiches."*

*Hello! There goes a team, all rush for the door when a team passes, wonder how they would act if a party of ladies should appear on the scene "all at once," eh?*

*And now a word for the birds; there is a beautiful little songster here whose species I, as yet, have been unable to find anyone to classify; it is quite small, about the size of and marked similar to a chipping bird, but it is the sweetest little songster of all.*

*"Those little birds that sing about your door," the scale of its tune comprises one whole, with from two to four half notes,*

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*which one will sing, and its mate repeat in an octave lower or higher. This plaintive little musician fills a bright spot in this desolate out of the world sort of place.*

*Deer are quite numerous, five of them discovering themselves in one day, and they are very tame, as all the game seems to be; quite often little chipmunks will come into our camp, and run about on the floor just as though at home, as doubtless they are.*

*While running [a] random line southwest of **Lake McMillan** about one mile, we encountered a bluff with unmistakable indications of ore. The line frequently crosses dense cedar swamps where one would be ashamed to have any excuse for being found other than that of business in these swamps, which in most cases are far above the level of the average water courses, with more or less descent in some directions, must have a kaolin substrature [sic – substrata], or perhaps, who knows, solid cast steel (?)[.] “There’s millions in it,” but joking aside, the bottom must be of some impervious nature or they would not hold water as they do.*

*Logs are still running down the river, and some 4 miles above there are about four million feet in a lake which is still frozen over, rendering sawing the ice necessary to liberate them. The **Paint River**, as doubtless is generally known, derives its name from the one given it by the aborigines, indicating color, it being thoroughly imbued with the disturber of peace in this locality, i.e. iron. Exploring parties are numerous, but none seem to have visited the bluff above mentioned. Judging by the “contrariness” of the needle, this locality is nothing but iron. I understand that **Mr. Runkel** is about to lay out a city on his range immediately; who’s going to put up the first “hotel?” “My light of other days”*

*is almost burned to the stick, so I must bid you good night. Will write again soon.*

Yours, truly,

**T.H. UNDER.**

Another item regarding Camp No. 1 of the Chicago & Northwestern Railway survey crew also appeared in the **May 7, 1881** edition, as follows:

*WE learn that **camp No. 1, of the railroad surveying party was burned** on last Thursday, by which the party lost all their tents, and some of their instruments. We are without further particulars.*

The second letter from **T.H. UNDER**, written **May 8, 1881** from **Mosquito’s Paradise** appeared the following week in the May 14, 1881 edition of *The Florence Mining News*, as follows:

*[From our own correspondent.]*

**MOSQUITO’S PARADISE,**

*May 8th, 1881.*

*At my last writing we were at **Camp Wild Cat**, but owing to [a] combination of circumstances beyond human control, it was and is my first and last letter from that obselete [sic – obsolete] post. You are already aware that our camp was destroyed by fire on the afternoon of the 4th inst. [sic – of this month] It caught fire by a spark from the stove pipe and spread so rapidly that the cook, who was alone at the time, was unable to save all our accoutrements, though under the circumstances, he did remarkably well, and what is more to his credit he, instead of removing his own goods first as many would have done, left them to the last and to destruction, saving nothing of his own. We were on our way to camp, having been out in the field all day, a tired and hungry crew, and upon coming in sight of home (?) the first to welcome us*

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*was fire and smoke and next a broom, which one of the boys, who had gone on ahead of us, set up a la signal corps – indicating a clean sweep. I tell you what, my ears (I don't speak for the rest of the party,) dropped clear down below my shoulders; had to tie them up over my back hair to keep them from dragging behind, you know. Well, we all gathered in a group about the ruins, in silence (?) mournfully watching the treacherous flames licking up the last of our treasures and rapidly converting them into ashes; well that is what we must all come to, i.e. ashes, not the licking – but human nature is weak, and a few minutes sufficed to wind up our fine sensibilities clean to the hub, and complete the destruction, whereupon the poor unfortunates fell into line and –*

*Not a sound was heard nor a funeral note,*

*As o'er the course to our new home we hurried;*

*While a tear each discharged as a farewell shot,*

*O'er the grave where our treasures were buried.*

*We took up our quarters for that and the following night at the **Half Way House**, thanks to **Mr. Main**, but for him we should have been compelled to “turn in” at the stable of the old quarters. The next thing in order, after storing away our supper, was an inventory of stock on hand. I found that my loss in the way of immediate necessities, as clothing, etc., was small compared with that of the rest of the party, some losing to the amount of \$50, and what was worse, all they had excepting what clothing they had on; and by the way, that reminds me we had been collecting material for and dreading a washing day, and were considerably exercised in mind over the probability of being compelled to*

*do it ourselves, but this fire settled the matter, pro tem; good way to get “shet” [shed; rid] of the job; worth most as much as the Chinaman's method of roasting pig, – but perhaps some thoughtful person might say, rather expensive, but it is sure pop every time, and if any of our readers wish to test the matter, they need not be deterred from fear of a suit for infringement, no charge.*

*Next morning we went up to view the ruins, and found the cellar without trouble, hadn't burnt the hole a bit; poked about in the ashes, fished out our cook stove and although we have it now set and running, it looks – well, it looks as though it was trying to scratch an ear with its hind leg. Friday we spent in moving camp, had to send for new supplies of course, and at present writing are under canvass; we have a hunter connected with the party, and Friday he brought us in a deer – no he didn't bring it in either, shot, dressed it, and hung it up to dry I guess, for by some misunderstanding the carcass was not brought into camp. This morning he went out to **Lake McMillan** and shot a duck, he brought in the bird and two perch, the bullet went through the duck coming out of its head, and it is supposed that the fish being inside the duck were “fired out” by the bullet, and were so confused that they towed the bird safe in shore, delivering themselves and game into the hands of the Philistines. I cannot vouch for this, but I have seen the man and his rifle, the lake, bird and fish.*

*By the way, did you ever see an aborigine smile? Well, I have, Lo [an Indian – Native American] is his name you know, that's universally understood, must be so, for a standard author says so. Yes, I saw Lo smile (?). How did he look? Let me see. Well, it was built somewhat after the*

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*manner of the Irishman's cannon, only the ingredients were somewhat different. Just supply yourself with a lot of long black hair, intermix with copper, equal proportions, stir well before using, then pour this compound round any hole, let it cool, then behold, there's our smile. Expression? About as much as a volcano has. How do I know it was a smile? Because he was "biling drunk" – so drunk that when he attempted to shoulder his 50th pack, he rolled over backwards, almost turning a complete summersault, striking on his head and shoulders, feet up, and when his body straightened out his head bobbed up like a jack in a box, hearing us laugh, looked toward where we stood, when Lo, he smiled.*

*Friday afternoon I received a call from the **Judge** and **Mr. McIntosh**, member of the bar, all of Florence; it was quite a pleasant surprise party to me, thanks for that Havana [cigar]; they are not half as plenty as mosquitoes. Five miles of road have been located, but none of it at this end, and every new line we run discovers indications of the surest kind. I supposed when the line is located, that this part of the country will look like a beehive. Already **Mr. Shafer** is cutting a more direct road to his find on 31.*

Yours, truly,  
**T.H. UNDER.**

Also appearing in the **May 14, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News* were the following two items under the "Personal" column and the third as a general news item, as follows:

## **PERSONAL.**

–**Geo. Runkel** and family moved into their new residence on Monday last.

–Our old friend **Duncan McMillan**, is with the **C. & N.W. Ry Co's** survey. At

*present he is within wading distance of the beautiful lake that was named in his honor.*

*THE C. & N.W. Ry Co's engineers camp southwest of **Duncan McMillan's Lake**, [sic] is in a charming situation. After being burnt out they located their camping ground at the **south west corner of the northwest quarter of sec. 5, 42-32**, near which a sparkling stream of the purest water runs. Our gifted friend, **L.A. McNeil**[,] has been making a sketch of it.*

An article announcing the organization of the **Crystal Falls Iron Company** appeared in the **May 21, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News*, as follows:

*The **Crystal Falls Iron company** has organized under the laws of the State of Michigan, and the articles of incorporation have been filed with the Secretary at Lansing. The following are the names of the officers:*

**N.K. Fairbank**, Chicago, President.

**Col. J.H. Howe**, Chicago, Vice President.

**F.H. Head**, of the Elk Rapids Iron Works, Secretary and Treasurer.

**Geo. Runkel**, Esq[.] – who is one of the directors – is Superintendent.

*Work will be prosecuted vigorously on the company's valuable mining property in the vicinity of **Crystal Falls**. A car load of horses were shipped up this week for work at the mines. **A town will be laid out on the n.e. ¼ of sec. 29, 43-32, in a suitable location.** The machinery for a **saw mill** is also on the way, and will be put in operation as early as possible. The timber in the vicinity is hard wood [sic – hardwood] and pine, and the land well adapted for farming purposes. The **Paint river** [sic – River], close by, will furnish a series of fine water powers, for manufacturing purposes. There is some talk of a furnace to be erected at a future date.*

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T.H. UNDER's third letter, written on **May 15, 1881** from **Mosquito's Paradise** and quite fanciful, appeared in the **May 28, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News*, as follows:

*[From our own correspondent.]*

**MOSQUITO'S PARADISE,**  
May 15th, 1881.

*I can't help it, must fire it off, these wintry nights force it from me, so here goes: If 12 men can exist 10 days without salt (we know they can for we have tried it), how many gray blankets will it take to keep them warm these cold nights? Where is that **Vennor** that promised us hot weather after the 10th inst. [sic – of this month], and we have had frosts since that date? "shoot him;" he hit the thunder showers, or rather they hit us, square in the eye; now what was the use of fooling us about hot weather and all that sort of thing? Well, it's "an ill wind that blows nobody any good,["] and we have the "dead wood" on the gallinippers [mosquitos], eh? Too cold for them; they had a high old time on our first night here; we have a clothes line, strung from pole to pole, in our tent; and these little birds detailed a small detachment from the main army as musicians, who took up their positions on the string line, first purloining a comb from somebody's vest pocket – Hello! Here comes our hunter with a string of splendid pike, product of **Lake McMillan**; now we'll acquire an extra invoice of brain power.*

*Let's see – where was I? Just got the comb from somebody's vest pocket, or rather the mosquitoes had – yes, and then after supplying themselves with the necessary amount of paper – you know we boys used to do it – they had a rattling old*

*time, and about midnight they stopped for refreshments, I mean of course this small detachment, for the rest had been helping themselves ad libitum ad finem, and after lemonade, ice cream, sandwiches, etc., stole a pocket knife, to use as a toothpick, and left that where it could be found in the morning, but the comb they hesitated longer about parting with, for that was not returned until the next night; you see it has been so cold since, they have not been at all happy.*

*I find there is one advantage in this Crusoe life of ours, and that is, you can't spend any loose change you may happen to have in your pockets; take it out and look at it as a sort of curiosity – wonder where it came from – what it was made for – with a sort of vague idea that it was intended for some good purpose, and mechanically restore it to its resting place, thinking that some day [sic – someday] in the dim future you may meet with some genius able to explain its use.*

*Our town is growing rapidly, two new buildings have been erected within a few days, and by the way, suppose we walk up town, just finished dinner, so its [sic – it's] a good time to take a look at the place, sorry I can't offer you a cigar, but all we had, if there were any at all, we left at camp [sic – Camp] Wild Cat.*

*But I'll do the best I can to entertain you; let's go this direction and inspect the business portion of the town, and let me give you a piece of advice, don't appear surprised at anything you may see or hear, for you will meet with a good-hearted "hail fellow well met" sort of people, but very sensitive on matters touching the interests of this place.*

*Well, here we are, this building is the Marine Hospital; yes, I know the boys have plumped it down right in the middle of the*

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street, but that can be easily regulated; take a peep in; two patients, one with a badly cut leg, and the other, so the doctor says, has sustained an incomprehensible, compound, reversed curve of the forearm; I'm no Latin scholar, so I don't know exactly what that is, but Mr. Dr. says he'll recover.

Now turn your attention to the other side of the avenue; there you see the city hall in which, of course, are the offices of the municipal authorities, and also that of our real estate and loan agent. Shall we give him a call? Before introducing you to him, let's stand aside and overhear the conversation, for I see he has a victim in tow:

Vic. – “Good afternoon, Mr.” –

R.E.G. – Interrupting him, – “Mr., Mr., don't mister me, call me Reg.”

Vic. (trembling) – Mr. – a – I – excuse me; I mean Reg, can I buy a lot?”

Reg. – (Scanning him from stem to stern as though he was a good mind to prepare him for a 2x8,) “Umph, what for? Sell Jersey lightning?”

“No, sir; finishing business.”

“Finishing business! Finish what?”

“I want to finish touching up the n.w. corner of s.e. ¼ of that chieftan's proboscis.”

“Ha, ha, give us your paw, old bricktop; wat'l you take?”

Hadn't we better be moving, as old Reg hasn't spotted us yet, and perhaps you don't care to interview him, at all.

There, you see that flourishing little subdivision, just over there in the n.e. quarter of town; from this point you can get an excellent bird's eye view; that's Frenchtown; they petitioned the last legislature praying to be set off, thinking they can run their own machine, you see; and between you and me, needn't say anything about it, I think they'll get one

grand “set off” about the time that tall pine you see inclining that way reaches for them.

This is Whisky Alley, and by the way, the denizens of this quarter have been so unruly and noisy of late, that we have been compelled to organize and choose city officers. The election was held Tuesday, 10th inst. [sic – of this month], and with the usual amount of bulldozing, ballot stuffing, etc., (only 16 killed and 47 seriously injured, in the 4th ward, you see we are civilized,) as a matter of course, and the day passed off quietly, the full and treating ticket was elected, all the corps being elected to Board of Common Scoundrels; we are out on alderman, however, as none were found eligible on account of being too thin 'round the edges.

Our Sundays, for the most part, have been rainy, gloomy days; we pass the time in cleaning up, writing and reading, when we have anything in that line, feeling it would be worth something to be even within sound of that little chapel bell of **Florence**, but if I cannot actually be with them, I can take in the situation mentally, and console myself with a review of the only sermon I have heard since coming here, and that by **Rev. H.P. Cory**, on hospitality. Perhaps it made a deeper impression on my mind, being a stranger myself, and I believe the only one there at that time. But it is getting late, and I must close.

Yours, truly,

**T.H. UNDER.**

The following week, in the **June 4, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News*, the following article announced the contract for the extension of the **Chicago & Northwestern Railway to Crystal Falls**:

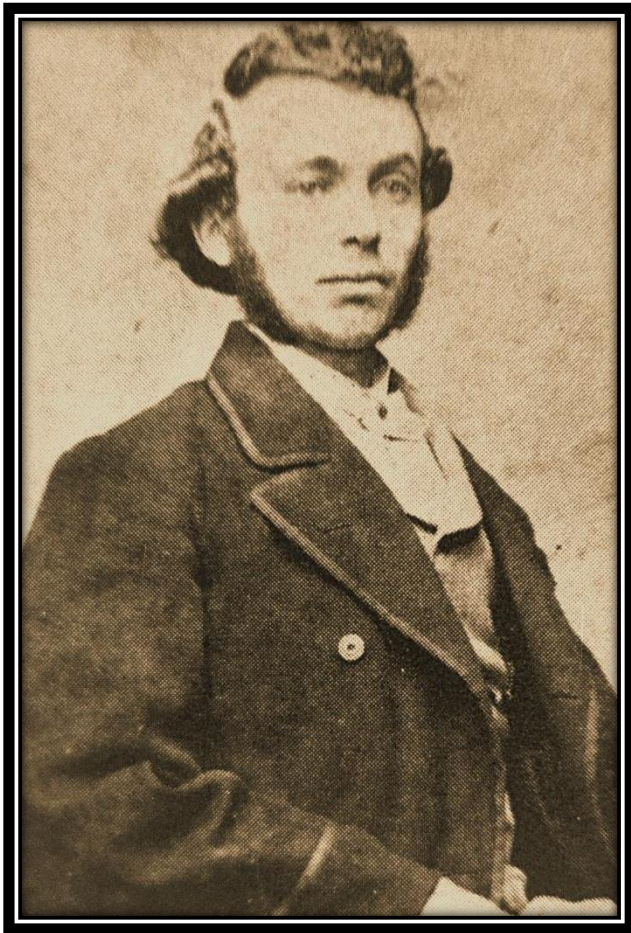
**THE contract for the extension of the railroad to Crystal Falls, has been let to George Runkel and others.** Mr. Runkel is superintendent, and commenced on



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*Monday to push the road with his usual energy. About 60 men are now working on it.*



**George Runkel (1839-1913)**  
*[Iron County Historical Museum]*

In the **June 11, 1881** edition of Escanaba's *The Iron Port*, the following two items regarding railway extensions were published, as follows:

### **Range Items.**

**–Captain Runkle [sic – Runkel] contracts for the railroad extension to Crystal Falls and has already sixty men at work.**

*–Work upon the **railway extensions**, towards **Felch mountain [sic – Mountain]** and **Crystal Falls**, is pushed with all possible vigor, but it is almost impossible to keep men in the woods at laborers [sic - laborers'] wages, on account of the flies and musquitos [sic - mosquitos].*

News of **Dr. H.C. Kimball** being hired by two iron mining companies in the **Crystal Falls** district was published in the **June 11, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News*, as follows:

*The services of **Dr. H.C. Kimball**, a brother of **Dr. L.J. Kimball**, of **Norway**, and a first-class **physician and surgeon**, have been secured by the **Crystal Falls Iron Co.**, and also by the **Union Iron and Steel Co.**, whose mines are adjacent. The selection is an excellent one, and all who meet the doctor will find him a genial, social gentleman. We copy the following from the *Enterprise*, published at **Colon, Michigan**, where the doctor formerly resided:*

*“**Dr. H.C. Kimball** started for the **Lake Superior region** this week, with a view of locating in that section in the practice of medicine. He graduated at Detroit medical college a number of years ago, and was a student at the University of Ann Arbor. We can assure the people there that the acquisition will be one that they may feel justly proud of with the long and large experience he has had for years in the science and practice of medicine, and while here the doctor acquired a reputation second to none in the healing art, especially in surgery. He has been a resident in this place eleven years and in that time has gained the confidence of our people as being a successful practitioner. He has also been a useful and active member of the several secret societies, holding the highest official positions in each, taking a prominent part in those bodies grand and*

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*subordinate; his labors have been fraught with success and credit to himself; his many friends will miss him very much."*

Just two weeks later, in the **June 25, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News*, notification was made that the **Village of Crystal Falls** had been platted and lots were for sale, as follows:

**THE village of "Crystal Falls" has been platted and lots are now ready for sale.** *The location is a beautiful one and land is such, that future years, [sic] will see the adjacent country bloom and blossom as the rose. "Gather ye roses while ye may," or in other words, secure a town lot when you can.*

*The **Crystal Falls Iron Company** have [sic – has] been shipping a **Blandy saw mill**, this week, to their **new town of Crystal Falls**. It will be put in operation as soon as possible to supply the want of lumber. The town will grow rapidly as soon as material can be furnished. The location and soil is good all around it, and before the snow flies four or five mines will be in operation in the immediate vicinity.*

The following week progress on the **railroad extension toward Crystal Falls** was noted in the **July 2, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News*:

**THE railroad operations** towards **Crystal Falls** is [sic – are] being pushed forward with energy under the management of **George Runkel**, the contractor. Already a camp is established about 10 miles from here. **George W. Bowes**, the "walking boss," is making things hum under his supervision.

The next week the **July 9, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News* reported additional progress on the line to **Crystal Falls**, as follows:

**BETWEEN 300 and 400 men** are at work on the line of the **railroad to Crystal**

**Falls**. *The grading is now being pushed simultaneously along a distance of about ten miles from here. Mr. **Geo. Runkel**, with his characteristic energy[,] intends if there is such a thing in the books, to have the railroad completed to the mines, so that ore can be shipped from them early in October. All aboard for Crystal Falls.*

In the **July 16, 1881** edition of Escanaba's *The Iron Port*, two railroad items appeared in the "Range Items" column, as follows:

### **Range Items.**

*–Four hundred men are employed on the **railroad to Crystal Falls** and it is expected that ore can be shipped over it early in October.*

*–The prospect is now that the **railroad will not be completed to Felch mountain [sic – Mountain] before the close of the season** for shipments. –Range, 7th.*

As the railroad neared **Crystal Falls**, the following two items appeared in the **July 16, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News*, as follows:

**MR. WILLIAM DOUCET**, an enterprising young **merchant**, is putting up his stakes in the **new city of Crystal Falls**. He will carry a large general stock and will undoubtedly build up a large trade. As the railroad will be in by next October, there will be – as there was in **Florence** – a large influx of people and a great many wants to supply.

**THE Main Bros.**, [sic] have started a **daily stage line from Florence to Crystal Falls**, leaving the **Florence House** and **Main's Livery stable** at 1 o'clock p.m., arriving at **Crystal Falls** at 4 o'clock p.m. Returning the stage leaves **Crystal Falls** at 7 o'clock, a.m. [sic – a.m.], arriving in **Florence** at 10 o'clock, a.m. This is a great convenience to the many who are daily going to that point, and it is to be hoped that

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*the enterprising managers will meet with success in their venture.*

The **railroad extension's progress** was recorded in the **July 23, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News*, as follows:

*THE **Crystal Falls railroad** is being shoved along as fast as possible. This is a very unfavorable season of the year for energetic operations, yet work is being prosecuted simultaneously along the line, for thirteen miles.*

The following week, the **July 30, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News* reported that still **more railroad workers arrived** to work on the extension, as follows:

*AND still they come. **One hundred and six men to work on the Crystal Falls extension** arrived on Wednesday. **Mr. Runkel** is bound to have the road completed to the Falls by October first, if such a thing is possible.*

In the **August 6, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News*, more **railroad extension news** was noted, as well as the completion of the platting of **Crystal Falls**, as follows:

***560 men are employed on the Crystal Falls extension of the railroad.** It is the intention of the contractors to have 700 men at work by the end of this month.*

*THE **Crystal Falls Iron Company** have [sic – has] completed the platting of their new town of **Crystall** [sic – Crystal] **Falls**. We expect to go up in a few days to select our corner lot and will then report.*

***FIFTY more men arrived on Wednesday to work on the railroad extension.** Notwithstanding this, the contractors are hiring all the men and teams that offer, so come along as there is plenty of work.*

The following week the **August 13, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News*

reported further **railroad extension news**, as follows:

*THE work on the **Crystal Falls extension of the railroad**, [sic] has so far, [sic] encountered very little rock. Sand and gravel has [sic – have] been found in the cuts, with – in rare cases – a few boulders. Some of the deepest cuts are in sand all the way.*

***GEORGE W. BOWES**, the old “walking boss” on the **Crystal Falls railroad extension**, who was prostrated by the heat, a short time ago, is not getting along as satisfactorily as he would wish. He is still weak and not yet able for active duty.*

Mention of the **Crystal Falls railroad extension** appeared in the **August 27, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News*, as follows:

*THE new rails on the **Crystal Falls extension** are being strung along at a rapid rate and are being spiked into place as fast as **roadmaster** [sic – Roadmaster] **Sutherland** can do it.*

***GEO. RUNKEL & CO.**, the contractors on the **Crystal Falls railroad extension**[,] are pushing the work along as fast as it is possible for men and teams to do it. On Wednesday they received 40 men from Madison, also a span of mules and 12 new wagons. The teams and drivers were sent by **C.J.L. Meyers**, of **Hermansville**.*

The following week, the **September 3, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News* carried the following two items:

***F.H. HEAD**, of **Elk Rapids, Mich.**, the secretary and treasurer of the **Crystal Falls Iron company**, visited the company's mines at the Falls on Saturday last, and also examined the **Rominger mining property** on which they hold an option of a lease. He left for **Elk Rapids**, by way of **Escanaba** on the propeller **Leland**, of which*

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he is part owner. He declares his intention to build on of the best iron furnaces in the country at Crystal Falls, at no very distant date.

**PETER ROONEY** was *fatally poisoned at camp 2, on the Crystal Falls railroad, in Marquette county, Mich., about eight miles from here, on Thursday. It appears that a bottle of whisky and aconite had been prepared for horse medicine, and Rooney and some others partook of it, supposing it to be plain whisky. The others recovered, but Rooney having taken a larger quantity, died before a physician could reach him. His remains were brought here for burial.*

Also appearing in the **September 3, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News* was an article featuring information about the **newly-platted village**, as follows:

*[From our Special Correspondent.]*

**THE VILLAGE OF CRYSTAL FALLS, on the N.E. ¼ of Section 29, Township 43, Range 32, Marquette county, Michigan, has been laid out by the Crystal Falls Iron company, and lots are now offered for sale at low prices and on reasonable terms. The village derives its name from the Falls of [the] Paint River near which it is situated. There is a water power of over 2,000 horse-power, suitable for manufacturing purposes, on which the company intends soon to erect a fifty ton smelting furnace, affording employment to several hundred mechanics and laborers. The village is located on high ground, which insures its freedom from malarial influences, and is surrounded by an extensive maple forest which affords abundant hardwood timber for manufacturing purposes, and material for charcoal for many years to come. The soil**

*is of excellent quality, and when the timber is cleared off, will produce large crops of all kinds of grain and vegetables suitable to this region. The **Paint River** traverses the largest pinery of any stream in the Northern Peninsula, and Crystal Falls will undoubtedly soon become a prominent lumbering point. The company have [sic – has] already a saw mill, shingle and planing mill in operation so that lumber for building purposes can be had at once, and at reasonable rates. The village is also situated in the center of a large and rapidly improving iron district. Three mines in the immediate vicinity are already taking out ore for shipment this fall, and the present explorations indicate that at least four more mines owned by wealthy mining companies will begin shipping early next season. About **Oct. 1st, 1881**, the **Chicago & Northwestern Railway** will be completed to Crystal Falls, which will most likely be its terminus for some time to come. Merchants, mechanics, miners, laborers, hotel keepers, and all classes of people will find here a splendid field for enterprise, and only need to make a personal examination of the region to become convinced of its numerous advantages.*

*Buildings for business and residence purposes are now going up at a rapid rate, several hundred people are already busily employed, and from present indications Crystal Falls must become a thriving and populous city in the near future. A **daily stage line** is now running from **Florence**, and tracklaying from Florence to Crystal Falls is progressing at a rapid rate.*

*For further particulars call on or address, **GEO. RUNKEL, Sup't of Crystal Falls Iron Co., Florence, Wis., or S.D. HOLLISTER, at Crystal Falls.***

*The **September 24, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News* reported the **arrival***

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of more laborers for the Crystal Falls railroad extension, as follows:

**TWO car loads of laborers arrived on Thursday last, to work on the Crystal Falls extension.** This road is bound to be completed by the middle of October, if men and money can do it. **This addition will make a force of 800 men.** The **bridge across the Brule river** is being pushed along with all possible speed. When this is completed, two weeks of fair weather will see the iron laid to the Falls.

Also noted in the **September 24, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News* were the following items:

–**John McKenna**, who measures 44 inches around the breast, and **Dr. F.L. Bond**, took a birdseye view of **Crystal Falls** on Thursday last. They are both largely interested in the **Paint River Iron Co.**

–**R.L. Selden**, Esq., one of the proprietors of the **Sharon mine**, at **Iron River**, arrived from Connecticut on Saturday last.

The **October 22, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News* noted:

**MESSRS. RUNKEL & CO.**, the **Crystal Falls railroad contractors**, have sold out their **warehouse at this place [Florence]** to the **Menominee River Lumber Co.**, and have removed their headquarters, for the present, to the south side of, and close to, the **Brule river**.

A fatal canoeing accident on the **Paint River in Crystal Falls** was also reported in the **October 22, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News*, as follows:

A **VERY sad and fatal accident occurred at the village of Crystal Falls** on Sunday last. Three men entered a canoe for the purpose of crossing the river. When about half way over the canoe for some reason became unmanageable and drifted

over the falls. Before reaching the falls one of the men jumped out and got safely to shore. The other two went over with the canoe and were drowned. Their names are **Henry Anderson** and **August Gilbert**.

Additional information on the **fatal canoeing accident** appeared in the **October 29, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News*, as follows:

**OUR latest advices from Crystal Falls**, Thursday afternoon, are to the effect that the **bodies of the two men drowned by going over the falls in a canoe have not yet been recovered.** A thorough search was made for the bodies at the time, but no signs of them were to be found. The search has been continued from time to time since, and giant powder has been exploded in the vain hope that the concussion would bring the bodies to the surface. It is more than probable that the strong current has carried them down the river, and if they are ever found it will be miles below the falls.

The **Crystal Falls railroad extension** was reported to be visible from the new town in the **November 5, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News*, as follows:

**CRYSTAL FALLS** is beginning to feel the coming boom and life that the advent of a rail road [sic – railroad] always brings to a new town. **The railroad grade is already visible from the town**, and work is, notwithstanding the unfavorable weather, being prosecuted with vigor. For the purpose of completing the road as rapidly as possible, work has been suspended at the mines and saw mill and the men put on the road. **300 men will be kept at work all winter completing the different branch lines in the vicinity of the Falls.** For their accommodation, a two-story hotel, 36x60, is being built at Crystal Falls. The piles are all driven for the **Brule bridge**, and it is

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*expected that trains will cross in about ten days. The grade is now ready for the ties and rails, eight miles beyond the river. Mr. Geo. Runkel is building a residence in town, and business looks very promising. It is safe to presume that the entire track will be completed to Crystal Falls early in December.*

At the beginning of the New Year, the **January 7, 1882** edition of *The Florence Mining News* reported the **anticipated arrival of the rails to Crystal Falls**, as follows:

*WE hear it rumored that the iron will be laid into Crystal Falls, by the 15th inst. [sic – of this month] Hope so.*

The **February 11, 1882** edition of *The Florence Mining News* included items about the **sawmill** and the **railroad extension**, as follows:

*THE saw mill [sic – sawmill] at Crystal Falls, is doing a ripping business.*

*THE Crystal Falls railroad is almost completed, and the inhabitants of the Crystal city, are exceedingly jubilant thereat. Next summer will see a wonderful [sic – wonderful] change in the place, and the half a dozen mines which will be in operation, within a radius of a mile, will give it an impetus, the like of which was never before seen in the country. Inside of a year, we should not be surprised to see one or two blast furnaces in operation. The proprietors of the town Col. J.H. Howe and George Runkle [sic – Runkel] are live, energetic men and intend to assist its growth by every means, in their power.*

The following week the **February 18, 1882** edition of *The Florence Mining News* again predicted the **imminent arrival of the railroad extension**, as follows:

*WE learn from good authority that the road will be completed to Crystal Falls*

*by the 25th inst. [sic – of this month] The grading is all finished.*

Finally, the **March 4, 1882** edition of *The Florence Mining News* was able to announce that the **railroad track had arrived in Crystal Falls**, as follows:

*THE railroad is into the Falls, and the Crystalizers are exceedingly glad thereat. Business is spring [sic – springing] up with a spring boom and the “good times a coming” are on hand sure. Business houses are dotting the town site and everything augurs well for the coming season, which will be one of great activity. By next winter Crystal Falls will have grown so fast that it will hardly be certain of its own identity. They are a wide awake set of business men [sic – businessmen] who are taking hold there and if they don’t make things get right up and hum, they are willing to take a back seat in the gallery.*

*BOTH of the new towns are very badly off in the matter of wagon roads. This is something that should be attended to well and systematically, as we are badly off in this respect. Nothing settles up a new county like good roads. They induce settlers to come in as they are not slow to perceive and apperciate [sic – appreciate] advantages of this kind for getting to market. Our villages can at the same time be made centers of trade. A good farmer is loath to come in and purchase even a choice tract of land, if he knows that he will have to build miles of road at his own expense, in order to get an outlet for his produce. Our people should see to it well that good men are selected for overseers of highways.*

The following week the **March 11, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News* mentioned the **first passenger train was anticipated by April 1**, as follows:

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–**George Runkel**, of **Crystal Falls**, dropped in to see us again, on Wednesday last. He reports everything in a state of great activity in the coming city. Expects the passenger train in by the first of April. Thinks that the **Brier Hill Iron and Coal company** have 3,000,000 tons of ore that they know of. Says that the biggest hotel in the country is being erected at the town.

In the **May 20, 1882** edition of *The Florence Mining News* regular passenger train service between Florence and Crystal Falls was announced, as follows:

**A REGULAR passenger train is now run between here and Crystal Falls.**

The **June 2, 1882** edition of *The Florence Mining News* reported the following:

**THE trains commenced running through to Crystal Falls and Iron River**, on Monday last, which is a great accommodation to the citizens of those places.

In the **June 24, 1882** edition of *The Florence Mining News*, the following article noted some of the difficulties in running a railroad line through the wilderness:

**ONE** of the worst difficulties which railroad engineers have to contend with in this section of the country is what are commonly called “**sink holes**.” Several were found on the line of the **Menominee River railroad**, between here and **Powers**. They generally occur on low ground which sometimes has an apparently solid surface. The small lakes and ponds with which this country is dotted, were evidently more numerous ages ago than at the present time. A great many of them had apparently neither inlet nor outlet. In time vegetation encroached from the shores, gradually contracting the visible surface of the water. This was primarily in the shape of mosses,

afterwards of stunted shrubs, and latterly of large moisture loving trees, such as cedar and tamaracks. Slowly as ages wore away and generations of vegetable organisms had flourished and died, the surface became entirely covered, making what is commonly called a shaking bog. Accumulations of vegetable matter of this kind in the course of time succeeded former accumulations, until in after years many feet of a substance, sufficiently buoyant and closely resembling peat, formed a roof, so to speak, over the water. After a time – in the case of a shallow pond – these might by their ever increasing weight reach the bottom and form comparatively solid ground. In the event of a great depth of water only a comparative crust would extend over the dismal depths of mud and fluid below. When a railroad grade strikes one of these treacherous formations it is only a question of weight and thickness of the upper formation. If the superincumbent weight is too heavy, and the crust too thin to support it, the grade must settle until it rests on the bed of the former lake. In one case near **Spread Eagle lake**, it is said the rail road [sic – railroad] bed gradually sank 60 feet, before it found a resting place. The latest trouble with a “sink hole,” is on the **Crystal Falls rail road [sic – railroad] extension**, about one mile this side of the village. The grade there passes through a small swamp, near an open lake. Trouble has been experienced by its settling at different times, but last Friday a portion of it quietly dropping down about eight feet, throwing up a ridge of the upper crust on one side, to about an equal height. A gang of men were immediately put at work upon it, who after piling in about 200 logs and similar material stopped the sinking and re-arranged [sic – rearranged] the track so that a train could pass. On Saturday it sank

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*about three feet more, while the evening train going south was passing over. It is thought that the grade has now struck bottom and will hereafter be a fixture.*

In its **April 21, 1883** edition, *The Florence Mining News* reported the following:

**A WASHOUT occurred on the railroad near Crystal Falls, Thursday, a small lake close to which the track is laid overflowing and carrying away the road bed. Passengers on Thursday's train from Florence were obliged to walk from this point to the Falls, the train being unable to proceed. Repairs were speedily made and trains are running as usual now.**