

# Duluth and St. Louis County Minnesota

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## Their Story and People

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An Authentic Narrative of the Past, with Particular  
Attention to the Modern Era in the Commercial,  
Industrial, Educational, Civic and  
Social Development

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Prepared under the Editorial Supervision of  
WALTER VAN BRUNT

Assisted by a Board of Advisory Editors

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decades of operation, was 520,686,631 tons, and there still remain billions of tons, though some of it is of low grade.

It is a wonderful possession. Its operation brings into circulation in St. Louis County tens of millions of dollars each year, the monthly pay-roll on the two ranges being approximately \$3,000,000. Its operation has developed communities that are a pride to the county and state, and public schools that probably lead the whole country, the educational system of Minnesota being wonderfully efficient, mainly because the revenue it receives from the operation of its mineral land enables it to employ the highest grade of educators.

**Other Mesabi Leaders.**—Of course, Henry W. Oliver is not the man to whom the whole of this excellent state of affairs is to be attributed. Many other great business men and engineers have had part in the enormous development that has come. But to Oliver is due the initial credit. The Merritts showed the ore. Oliver made it usable, which was an all-important service. Others came in to carry it on to the immensity of recent years.

Thomas F. Cole was president of the Oliver Iron Mining Company in early consolidation days; W. J. Olcott, vice-president; Pentecost Mitchell, general manager, and J. H. McLean, assistant general manager. With the march of time, W. J. Olcott became president; Mitchell, vice; J. H. McLean, manager, and J. H. Hearing, assistant general manager.

**Other Large Mining Companies.**—Among the other important mining companies of the Mesabi and Vermilion Ranges are: Cleveland-Cliffs Iron Company; Jones and Laughlin Steel Company; M. A. Hanna and Company; Mahoning Ore and Steel Company; Mesabi Iron Company, which is beginning to exploit the billions of tons of lean magnetite of the Eastern Mesabi; Great Northern Iron Ore Properties; Pickands Mathers and Company, Republic Iron and Steel Company, Shenango Furnace Company, and Tod-Stambaugh Company. The State of Minnesota is also an appreciable factor in mining, owning wholly, or in part, forty-three mines, the operation of which brings an enormous revenue in royalties, which go to swell the school-fund. F. A. Wildes has been state mineral-lands agent for many years.

**Great Mesabi Mines.**—Among the great mines of the Mesabi Range are: the Hull-Rust, which has yielded 51,848,910 tons of ore; the Fayal, 29,908,246 tons; the Mahoning, 29,618,759 tons; the Adams, 22,310,351 tons; Mountain Iron, 17,198,871 tons; Burt, 16,347,691 tons; Morris, 14,949,021 tons; Canisteo, 14,681,979 tons; Stevenson, 13,945,402 tons; Biwabik, 12,793,623 tons; Spruce, 11,182,140 tons; Leonard, 10,877,931 tons. These figures are of shipments to end of 1919. There are several other mines from which millions of tons of ore have been taken, but the list would be too long to state here.

**Leading Iron Range.**—The Mesabi Range comes unquestionably first among the iron ranges of the Lake Superior District, and the relative importance of the ranges can be gauged by the following figures, which are of shipments to the end of 1919:

Mesabi Range .....	520,686,631 tons
Marquette Range .....	131,512,722 tons
Menominee Range .....	120,474,574 tons
Gogebic Range .....	116,962,117 tons
Vermillion Range .....	43,179,510 tons
Cuyuna Range .....	11,660,147 tons
Mayville and Baraboo ranges.....	2,070,216 tons



was transferred on October 20, 1893, to the Sellers Ore Company, "a combination of Pittsburg furnace men." C. H. Munger became superintendent, and shafts were being sunk in 1894. Winchell noted, in 1895, that the mine then had "an unpleasant amount of water to contend with."

Up to 1900, the total quantity shipped from the Sellers mine was 188,102 tons, but the mine has been yielding fair quantities almost every year since that time, the total mined to end of 1919 being 8,952,358 tons. The property passed to the Oliver Iron Mining Company, present operators, and shows an available deposit still of about thirteen million tons. What is known as the Sellers Townsite mine, also an Oliver property, has an available deposit of 33,373,500 tons, to be able to work which is one of the reasons for the recent removal of part of the Village of Hibbing.

**Mahoning Mine.**—The Mahoning Mine was purchased from the Wright and Davis Syndicate, and the great property has been termed "the largest open-pit iron mine in the world." It probably is, in combination with the other adjoining mines, which, by the ceaseless shovelling of the many and tireless steam shovels, have become merged into one vast gaping chasm. One writer thus describes the chasm, and the activity:

Stand on an edge of an open pit near Hibbing. One looks across a gulf a quarter of a mile wide and deep enough to lose a skyscraper in its huge trough. As far away as Grace Church from City Hall Square (New York) in one direction, as far in the other as from City Hall Square to the Battery, a puffing steam shovel is gnawing at the steep purple bank, perhaps a dozen of them here and there nipping at the rim of the bowl. Each thrusts its dipper against the bank, its jaws creak, the derrick groans, and five tons of ore are swung over the waiting car. As the bucket lets go its burden, one can hear one dollar and twenty-five cents clink into the feeholder's pocket, while another dollar and twenty-five cents jingle in the till of the leaseholding company. Ten of these bucket-loads fill a fifty-ton car that looks, from the brink of the pit, like a match-box on spools, as it crawls on the bottom. Another car is warped into place and the steam-shovel again groans under its burdening wealth. All day long, all through the summer, these shovels are scooping up six, eight, ten thousand tons a day of fusible wealth.

Such activity has been going on for a generation, not only in Hibbing, but in all parts of the Mesabi Range, the excavations (of earth as well as ore) being approximately as much every three or four busy years as were accomplished in the whole of the work at Panama Isthmus. But at Hibbing, from the brink of the Mahoning-Hull-Rust Mine, the result of the ceaseless delving is impressively evident. The Hull-Rust-Mahoning open-pit alone has yielded more than eighty million tons of ore up to the present. That means, roughly, one hundred million yards of excavation, and probably another forty million yards could be added for original stripping; say, 150,000,000 yards of excavation, in all. The Panama excavation represented only 80,000,000 yards up to July 1, 1909, and it was then estimated that only another 100,000,000 yards would complete the work of cutting the canal. This comparison will give the general reader some indication of the stupendous work daily proceeding at Hibbing.

The Mahoning Mine was explored by W. C. Agnew, in 1894. The Mahoning Ore Company was formed, and the work of stripping the surface was at once begun. It was the first mine to be stripped in the Hibbing District. The original discovery by Agnew was in the ne. qr. of section 3, township 57-21, but soon the development extended to the north half of sections 1 and 2. The mine came into the shipping list in 1895, the ore going over the Wright and Davis



logging road, known as the Duluth, Mississippi River and Northern, to Swan River, where it connected with the Duluth and Winnipeg line, leading to the ore docks at Superior. By the way, strenuous objection was made by the Mahoning Ore Company, in 1896, to the proposed inclusion of township 57-21 in Stuntz township, Mr. Agnew explaining that township 57-21 "is very rich, if not the richest in mineral and timber lands in the county," and, to support his belief that an injustice would be done the mining company by the proposed annexation which would give the township supervisors right to tax the company, he instanced the case of the school fund. Large amounts were drawn from the company, in school levy for the Hibbing District, in which the Mahoning location had been placed, notwithstanding that the children thereof "must walk from one to two miles to reach the schoolhouse." However, the protest was ignored, and the Mahoning location, with township 57-21, came within the jurisdiction of Stuntz, the richest township in the state.

The Mahoning Mine shipped more than two million tons of ore in the nineties, when A. O. Beardsley was the mining captain, and up to the end of 1919, had shipped 29,618,759 tons. The mine is still under the direction of Mr. Agnew, though the Mahoning Ore Company has given way to the Mahoning Ore and Steel Company. R. N. Marble is the general superintendent, and the mine still has an unworked deposit of approximately 75,000,000 tons, including the several Mahoning reserve properties controlled by the same company.

**Day Mine.**—The Day Mine was explored in 1892 or 1893 by Frank Hibbing. It adjoins the Burt, and passed eventually to the Lake Superior Consolidated Iron Mines, subsequently coming into the control of the Oliver Iron Mining Company. It had yielded only 20,626 tons by 1900, and is credited with only 319,453 tons up to the end of 1919, though some ore from it is included in Burt Mine figures. There is still available a deposit of approximately six million tons.

**Hull-Rust Mine.**—The Hull and Rust Mines are owned, in fee, by the Hull and Rust families, the original landowners being M. B. Hull and Ezra Rust. The mining leases were the Hibbing, Trimble and Alworth, the mining leases passing to the Lake Superior Iron Company, and in turn to the Lake Superior Consolidated Iron Mines, and the Oliver Iron Mining Company, present operators. The Hull-Rust Mines entered the shipping list in 1896, under management of the Consolidated. It was then an underground mine. The separate figures for the Hull and Rust Mines are not available, but the combined shipment up to the end of 1919 was 51,848,910 tons. No other Mesabi mine comes anywhere near the Hull-Rust in tonnage shipped, or in quantity mined in one year. Within recent years the mine has given more than five million tons a year, the record being 7,665,611 tons in 1916. The available unworked deposit of the Hull-Rust and Hull Reserve Mines aggregates to the stupendous total of about 120,000,000 tons.

**Penobscot Mine.**—The Penobscot Mine was explored in the middle nineties, by Cheeseboro, of Duluth, and shipments began in 1897, Eddy Brothers and Company being then in control. It was an underground mine, and very wet. In fact, it had the reputation of being "the wettest in the Lake Superior Region, the inflow of water being about 5,000 gallons a minute." The superintendent was John A. Redfern. In 1901, the property passed to the Oliver Iron Mining Company, previous shipments having been 127,204 tons. Between 1903 and 1918, the mine did not yield a thousand tons, but 32,531



iron began seriously to prospect. He was in the country at the time of the "gold rush" to Vermilion in the '60s; accompanied Chester in the '70s, and was then on both ranges with that surveyor, who was sent to investigate mineral possibilities. George R. Stuntz undoubtedly was the best-informed of Duluth pioneers as to what was then termed "outside lands" of St. Louis County, and it is but right that his name should have important place in its history.

**Early Explorers.**—David T. Adams explored and mapped the Mesabi Range in the '80s; Captain LeDuc was in the neighborhood of what later was Stuntz in 1887; but probably the first of the early explorers of the Mesabi Range to take up successful work in the district known as the Township of Stuntz was E. J. Longyear, of Minneapolis. Soon afterwards came R. M. Bennett, Frank Hibbing and John Mallman. Longyear in 1891 cut a road through from Mountain Iron West, as far as Nashwauk, in range 23.

**Lumbering.**—The lumber interests were the first to undertake active logging operations in the township, Wright, Davis and Company owning many thousands of acres of heavily timbered lands. Explorers discovered ore on the Wright, Davis and Company lands, and on April 19, 1893, the last-named company granted leases to the Mahoning Ore Company, supplements of October 4, 1893, March 1, 1894, March 15, 1895, March 28, 1895, and April 1, 1895, bringing up the total acreage of the lumber company's lands leased to the Mahoning Ore Company, in township 57-21, more than a thousand acres, on a royalty basis, the greater part at 27½ cents a ton. The leases were for a term of ninety-seven years.

It is not the intention here, in this chapter, to extensively review the lumbering, mining, or agricultural developments of the Town of Stuntz; all will have extensive review in other chapters. Suffice it here to state that Wright, Davis and Company, the principals of which were Ammi A. Wright, of Alma, Michigan; Charles H. Davis and W. T. Knowlton, of Saginaw, Michigan, sold to the Pine Tree Lumber Company for \$1,300,000 on July 14, 1892, four billion feet on Swan River, that sale clearing all of their holdings in that district. But they still possessed the land and more timber further north, and were gradually drifting into a state of affluent importance to the men interested in the exploitation of the vast mineral wealth of the Township of Stuntz.

**Mining Development in 1895.**—The "Proceedings of the Lake Superior Mining Institute," for 1895, in March of which year the members of that association met on the Mesabi Range, reviews the mining situation on the two ranges at that time. First, regarding the railway facilities in the new mining field, the review states:

"Railroads were not constructed to these mines (Mesabi) until the fall of 1892. There are not three roads running to the iron mines on the Mesabi. Only two of them, the Duluth and Iron Range and Duluth, Missabe and Northern, have hauled any ore. The Duluth, Mississippi and Northern in conjunction with the Duluth and Winiipeg, will haul its first ore the coming season.

"The D. & I. R. R. \* \* \* extended from its main line to the Mesabi mines in 1892 and 1893. \* \* \* The D., M. & N. Ry. was constructed from Stony Brook Junction, on the D. & W. R. R. to the mines of the Mesabi in 1892 and 1893. Built through the efforts of the Merritt Brothers, Chase Brothers and Donald Grant, it passed in 1893 into the hands of the Lake Superior Consolidated Iron Mines, in which company the chief stockholder is John D.



Rockefeller. This corporation also owns a number of mines on the Mesabi, and its own docks at Duluth. Its output in 1894 was nearly 600,000 tons of ore, from its own mines. In this season, the D., M. & N. Ry. carried more than 1,300,000 tons of ore to Lake Superior. The ore rate to the lake from all Mesabi mines is eighty cents per gross ton.

"The D., M., & N. was primarily intended to be a logging road, built by Michigan lumbermen; but the discovery of iron ore on lands belonging to these same parties (Wright, Davis and Company) and on adjacent tracts induced them to construct it standard gauge and of heavy rails, suitable for ore transportation. It is tributary to the D. & W. R. R., which has ore docks at Superior. The Mahoning mine at Hibbing will ship over this road, as will other mines further west when more fully developed.

"Beginning at the westernmost developed properties, we shall describe the mines of the Mesabi in order of occurrence eastward." Describing the "Hibbing Group of Mines," the review continues: "Hibbing is located in the northwest quarter section 6, township 57, range 20 west. \* \* \* Surrounded by a large amount of pine timber, and adjacent to large deposits of iron ore, it is a town of great promise.

"Lake Superior Mine, situated on the southwest quarter of southwest quarter, section 31, township 58, range 20 west \* \* \* was discovered in 1892 by Capt. T. W. Nelson, working under the direction of Mr. Frank Hibbing, of Duluth. No ore has been produced from this mine as yet. It is being developed for underground mining, under the direction of Mr. W. J. Olcott, for the Lake Superior Consolidated Company, who are operating it at present. The superintendent is Mr. P. Mitchell. It will probably be on the list of shippers for 1895. It is operated on a thirty-cent lease, and the profits are divided between the Consolidated and the Lake Superior companies.

"Mahoning Mine. After the discovery of ore in the northeast quarter, section 3, 57-21, the Mahoning Company, last year, developed one of the largest ore bodies on the range, in the north half of sections 1 and 2, 57-21. This ore is now being uncovered, or 'stripped' to prepare for shipments in 1895. The work is under the direction of Mr. W. C. Agnew. The fee to this land belongs to Saginaw lumbermen, the Mahoning Company holding a lease.

"Sellers Mine. This mine is situated just north and northeast of Hibbing. Shafts are being sunk and development work done as rapidly as possible. It is understood that this mine, like others in the Hibbing group, has an unpleasant amount of water to contend with. Mr. Chas. Munger is in charge of operations here."

The operation of the Sellers mine was on leases January 17 and April 5, 1893, from M. B. Hull to John M. Sellers, also of Chicago, calling for royalty of thirty-five cents, with a minimum of \$7,000. On October 20, 1893, John M. Sellers sold his lease of January 17, 1893, to the Sellers Ore Company.

**Organization of Township.**—Although Hibbing was incorporated as a village in 1893, it was not until 1894 that the movement which ended in the erection of the Township of Stuntz began.

On January 3, 1894, a petition praying for the organization, under the General Statutes of Minnesota Compilation, 1878, of congressional township fifty-seven north of range twenty west, "as the Town of Stuntz," was filed with the Board of Commissioners of



St. Louis County. The paper was signed by Burton Hurd, Eugene Brown, George L. Robinson, T. W. Nelson, J. F. Twitchell and other residents of that township, and was before the county commissioners for their consideration in February.

They then set off township 57-20 as the Township of Stuntz and ordered first election to be held at the office of Hibbing and Trimble, south half of northwest quarter of section six on February 27th.

The township remained with jurisdiction only over township 57-20 until 1896, when three other congressional townships were added to it, the result of a petition, to "annex to the Township of Stuntz townships fifty-seven and fifty-eight north of range twenty-one west, and fifty-eight north of range twenty," which was filed on April 7th. The paper was signed by J. D. Campbell, John Munter, W. H. Day, Jas. Geary and others, and after consideration by the commissioners at the April session of that board a hearing was ordered for May 5, 1896.

**Protest by Mahoning Ore Co.**—It became known eventually that W. C. Agnew, general manager of the Mahoning Ore Company, wrote to the county commissioners, under date of April 6, 1896, protesting against the granting of petition to annex the three additional townships and in particular regarding township 57-21, asserting that the petition "was not presented in our vicinity," and that "township 57-21 is very rich, if not the richest in mineral and timber lands in the country." He further stated that township 57-21 "has already been included in a school district with the other townships mentioned," and expressed a belief that "an injustice had been done us (presumably the Mahoning Ore Company) thereby," seeing that "a large amount of money has been collected for school purposes," which apparently was a regrettable circumstance. Regarding the school fund, Mr. Agnew stated: "The manner in which it was expended and the fight over it is a matter of record and does not reflect credit upon those having the matter in charge." He explained that "the Town of Hibbing is entirely in 57-20, and that the children in and around our location must walk from one to two miles to reach the schoolhouse." Therefore, he asked the commissioners "to ignore the request of the petition" and "allow us to make a separate township organization and receive and expend any money that we are entitled to within our own limits."

However, the protest was withdrawn by the attorney for the ore company, at the hearing before the commissioners on May 5th, and on that day the commissioners ordered the annexation of townships fifty-eight north of twenty and twenty-one range, and fifty-seven north of range twenty-one west, to the Township of Stuntz. Whether such action by the commissioners was taken because of the reinforcement of the original petition by another, filed May 5, 1896, cannot be determined, although the circulation and filing of the supporting petition may explain the withdrawal of the protest by the Mahoning Ore Company. The second of the petitions of 1896 referred only to township 57-21, and prayed that it be annexed to the Township of Stuntz. Anton Eriksson was the first signer of that petition.

**Enlargement of Stuntz.**—In 1913 there were some important changes. Petition of Oscar Mahnquist and others then (March, 1913) resident in the unorganized township fifty-six north of range twenty-one west requested annexation of that township to Stuntz; and petition of June 30, 1913, signed by Peter McHardy and others of town-



and Company, and came to what became Hibbing in 1891, in 1893 taking a homestead at Moran (Kelly) Lake, section 7-58-21.

**Mining.**—For the next hundred years, probably, the Township of Stuntz will be prominent, as the center of important iron mining. The ore not yet mined but known to be available totaling to an immense figure, the Mahoning Mines alone having more than seventy-five million tons available, notwithstanding that thirty million tons have been won from it since first opened. And there are many other mines in the township with an immense reserve of ore and probably much yet to be proved.

The prominent mines still in operation in the township, and to which references will be made elsewhere herein, are the Mahoning, Hull-Rust, Sellers, Buffalo-Susquehanna, Scranton, Laura, Leetonia, Agnew, Morris, Kerr, Stevenson, Nassau, Philbin, Longyear and Albany.

**Kitzville.**—The incorporated Village of Kitzville came into existence in 1912 after two previous attempts to incorporate the village had been made. The first attempt was made in January, 1911, when a petition which bears the date of January 26, 1911, sought to incorporate as a village the northeast quarter of section 5, township 57-20, represented as wholly platted into lots. The papers were deemed to be irregular by the county attorney. The second attempt was in May of that year. A petition was filed with the county auditor on May 4th, and two days later the county commissioners acted upon it, ordering election to be held "at the store of John Dimatteo, lot 4, block 3, townsite of Kitzville, on May 29, 1911. The election resulted in twenty-six voting for incorporation and twenty-nine against.

A petition, dated May 29, 1912, came before the commissioners on July 9th. Election was ordered to be held August 12, 1912, at same place. Thirty-one voted, all in favor of incorporation. Therefore, the corporate existence of Kitzville then began, with village bounds as follows: Northeast quarter, northwest quarter section 4, 57-20; northeast quarter, northeast quarter, section 5, 57-20; southwest quarter, southwest quarter, section 33, 58-20; southeast quarter, southeast quarter, section 32, 58-20.

The village is in School District No. 27. Present village officials are: Matt Kochevar, president; John Meadows, Louis Marolt, James Chiodi, councilmen; Alfred Dimatteo, clerk; Marko. Marolt, treasurer.

Assessed valuation of village is \$57,376. Population, 480.

**Mahoning (Village of).**—A petition was prepared in December, 1915, and dated December 31st, seeking to bring about the incorporation, as the Village of Mahoning, of 998.51 acres of land situated in section two and three of township 57-21, and sections 35 and 34 of township 58-21. Part of the territory had already been platted and the plat filed as the "Plat of Mahoning."

The petition was signed by W. F. Pellenz, Jr., W. C. Northey, R. N. Marble, Jr., J. C. Agnew and thirty-six other residents of the 493 stated to have been the total number of inhabitants on December 28, 1915, and it was adopted by the commissioners at their January, 1916, session, on motion of Commissioner Swanstrom. Election was ordered to take place "at the G. N. R. Depot, section 2, township 57-21," on Saturday, January 29, 1916.

No report of election was filed with the county auditor and the village has, therefore, no place among the incorporated places of the county. It is not known to present compiler whether election was



duly held and the motion defeated, or whether the attempt to incorporate was abandoned.

**Sturgeon.**—A petition, dated February 2, 1907, of Charles West and others, freeholders of township sixty-one north of range twenty west, was responsible for the organization soon afterwards of that congressional township, as the Township of Sturgeon.

The petition was filed with the county officials on February 9th, was adopted by the county commissioners on March 7th, and soon after in that year, 1907, the first town meeting was held, the voting place being the schoolhouse designated "No. 2" of School District No. 45.

The township has remained unchanged, as to boundaries, ever since. On the north, it borders on Linden Grove Township, on the east Alango, on the south Fern, and on the west Morcom Township. It is an agricultural township, with no railway facilities nearer than Angora, about ten miles to the east. The Sturgeon River passes through the township.

In 1907, its assessed valuation was \$21,574. In 1919, its valuation was \$39,772. In its first year as an organized township its total tax levy was \$524.25; in 1919, it was \$2,835.74. Originally, it was part of School District No. 45, but now it is served by the Unorganized School District directed by the county school superintendent. The township pays a school tax of 37.1 mills.

Sturgeon Township had a population of two in 1900; in 1910 there were 135 inhabitants; and in the last census-taking the tabulation was 184. Its development is gradual and permanent.

The township officers in 1920 were: Frank Johnson (chairman), Nestor Viano and John Ketola, supervisors; Fred Goodell, clerk; Andrew Roine, assessor; Ed. Neimi, treasurer.

**Toivola.**—The prosperous Township of Toivola was formed in 1911. It was formerly part of the Township of Kelsey, or rather the eastern half was.

A petition was filed with the county auditor on May 4, 1911, by freeholders of the congressional township fifty-four north of range nineteen west, at that time part of the Town of Kelsey, the petition praying that, with township 54-20, it be organized, "as the Township of Toivola," under the state laws of 1905. A reason stated for the separation of township 54-19 from Kelsey was that the roads were bad, mainly because of an unjust distribution of public funds by the officials of the Town of Kelsey, which at that time had jurisdiction over townships 54-19 and 18.

After some investigation, the commissioners formed the Township of Toivola as asked by petitioners, placing township 54-20 under its administration on July 10, 1911, subject to confirmation at first election, which was ordered to be held on July 29, 1911, at the schoolhouse No. 3, situated on the northeast quarter of section 11, of township 54-20.

They also favorably considered the request for the separation of township 54-19 from the Township of Kelsey, and after hearing remonstrances, detached it from Kelsey and attached the Township to Toivola.

It appears that the first township meeting in the Town of Toivola was held on July 17, 1911, at the residence of Tom Arkkola, township 54-19; but that meeting was declared to be illegal.

The settlers in Toivola Township are mostly of Finnish origin. They are people of thrifty life, industrious and frugal. They are,