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FOLLOWING THE PATHS of OUR PEOPLE AND PLACES

ROOTPRINTS

Erie History Project Exceeding All Expectations

by Ron Hein

The purpose of the project is to document the history of pioneering research to develop an economically feasible method to mine and process taconite financed by Pickands Mather and Erie Mining Company. This is being accomplished by telling the story of the work done by the company in their research lab, in their full scale equipped preliminary plant, and in the construction and operation of a commercial taconite mining and processing plant. Also it is the story of the men and women who worked to overcome the problems associated with the start-up of the facility, and who continually made improvements in the process to remain competitive and to meet the demands of the iron and steel producers. Eventually the mine and plant closed when it could no longer produce a cost effective iron ore pellet that could meet new demands from the iron and steel producers.

“... to document the history of pioneering research to develop an economically feasible method to mine and process taconite ...”

The Project is being carried out in four phases.

- Conduct and preserve oral history interviews. 120 interviews have been done, about 10 more are to be completed, and about 20 are in final form. When completed, copies will be available to the public and to researchers.
- Research and develop a publisher-ready manuscript. Two authors have completed and submitted a draft manuscript to the Project Team. Project Team members met on November 28, 2016 to begin selecting the photographs,

charts, maps and graphs

- Design, edit, publish and distribute the book. Donning Publishers will have 6 months to complete their process and print the book. The book will include an 8-page gatefold and a DVD with an expanded appendix and photographs, charts, maps and graphs to enhance the text.
- Design, develop and construct educational exhibits with a fixed version and a traveling version.

The fixed version will be installed at the St. Louis County Historical Society Museum in the Depot. Preliminary work

has begun on the traveling exhibit.

In cooperation with the Iron Mining Association of Minnesota (IMA), the project will provide educators with a free educational package based on the book. It will include a curriculum guide, instructor support materials and student learning materials. Donning Publishers will digitize the book to be available free to instructors and students. The

project will provide approximately 2,700 free copies of the book to Minnesota schools, technical colleges and universities. Finally, copies will be sent to the U. S. School of Mines and to libraries in the Arrowhead region.

The project budget is \$303,620. Grants, contributions, and commitments to date total \$254,885, so there is a shortfall of \$48,735. We are exploring a number of ways to achieve our budget and I have total confidence we will meet and exceed our goal. That being said, we welcome any and all contributions to “push the Erie Mining project over the top.”

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