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Copper Range Historical Society

OFFICE OF

# Bigelow House,

F. A. VAN SCHAIK, Proprietor.

Ontonagon, Mich., May 22 1892.

My dearest "Meemie":

On Friday I left Mr. Denton at Ironwood, or rather at Bessemer, six miles east, where he and his students were to spend their last day, in that vicinity. After a tedious journey I reached this place about five o'clock, and took up my quarters in this — barn! The picture — or cut — at top of page gives a good idea of the outside, except that you can't see the dirt and rubbish that have accumulated during the winter. The inside is spacious, scantily furnished, and, oh! so cold. I have gone about, shivering, ever since I have been here, and should have "shaken the dust off my feet to-day, if there had been even a gravel train. The town is at the mouth of a river of same name, and the latter in the course of ages has built up quite a wide layer of sand that runs out into the lake — being thus exposed on the north and west to all the breezes that come from those and intervening directions. Besides the cold, the winds bring from the beaches a great deal of fine sand, which has filled several streets and a good many yards — to the depth of 3 to 4 feet. Years ago when the copper mines in this vicinity flourished, Ontonagon was a very thrifty town. Now it is ~~none~~ like a galvanized corpse, just kept alive by the Diamond Match Co., which has two large saw mills here, and employs some 600 people. I went through the mills yesterday, and enjoyed the visit very much. The machinery is simple and effective, and one is surprised to see how short a time it takes to convert a log (floating in the water) into a pile of boards laid away to dry.



They saw two logs a minute - about half a million feet of lumber a day. I knew two or three gentlemen here, for having met them in Houghton, and wrote one of them from Ironwood of my intended visit. One had arranged for a whist party Friday, and I was included. We cut for partners at the end of each rubber, and I came out the lowest of the company! I dare say they will crow over Houghton a good deal. Last winter their crack player played over there, and was so badly beaten, that he said - in joke, of course - that he would never play there again; that they would have to play in Hancock. Some friend put an item in a Chicago paper, about his being so soundly thrashed at the whist table, and sent the paper to his wife. They are great jokers up here.

Yesterday I saw an old coll. of minerals, but there was very little in it of special interest to me. To answer your question - (your letter of last Sunday has been forwarded) - this is entirely a private trip, to see the country, make acquaintances, and inform myself on a variety of subjects that have a certain relationship to my profession. Surety matters, I hear, are not yet arranged, but I do not care to apply elsewhere just yet. I can learn a good deal by remaining out here another year, and the more I know, the better fitted I shall be for a position in some other place.

I note what you say about furniture, and have no doubt Mr. Cobb made a judicious selection. Of course the chair will remain in C. until I see it. Please thank Mr. C. for his trouble on my behalf. I'll thank you soon in person. Was very much pleased with F's letter to Mr. Taylor, and shall forward it in my return to H. I did not notice the German paper, but will do so later. How good Anna is, and how thoughtful! She seems, however, to be restless. Has she the qualifications for a successful milliner? Well, Betty, I think I will go out and get a little sun shine, before it is too late. Take good care of yourself, and be very prudent. Give much love to Grandpa, and with much for yourself - the checks, ever your