



Finding Aid for

**NORTHERN MICHIGAN OPERATIONS PHOTOGRAPHS SERIES,
1920-1951 (Bulk 1949-1951)**

Accession 270

Finding Aid Published: June 2011



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OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY: Benson Ford Research Center
The Henry Ford
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ACCESSION NUMBER: 270

CREATOR: Ford Motor Company. Photographic Department.

TITLE: Northern Michigan operations photographs series

INCLUSIVE DATES: 1920-1951

BULK DATES: 1949-1951

QUANTITY: 8.4 cubic ft.

LANGUAGE: The materials are in English.

ABSTRACT: In the 1920s Ford Motor Company constructed what was at the time the worlds largest sawmill complex in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The Iron Mountain plant supplied automobile body parts and wood patterns for the production of aircraft, ships, railroad cars, and mining trams. The photographs in this series serve to visually document Ford Motor Company production methods, as well as sawmill production, lumber manufacturing, and logging camp life.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- ACCESS RESTRICTIONS:** The materials are generally open for research. However, access to the unprocessed photographic negatives requires permission of the curator.
- COPYRIGHT:** Copyright has been transferred to the Henry Ford by the donor. Copyright for some items in the collection may still be held by their respective creator(s).
- ACQUISITION:** The bulk of the materials were donated to The Henry Ford by Ford Motor Company Archives in 1964. Additional material was acquired by The Henry Ford in 1978.
- RELATED MATERIAL:** Related material held by The Henry Ford:
- This series forms part of the Photographic Department (Ford Motor Company) Photographs subgroup, 1913-1971 (Bulk 1920-1955)
- Also see the Northern Michigan Operations (Ford Motor Company) records series, 1881-1946 (bulk 1925-1936)
- PREFERRED CITATION:** Item, folder, box, accession 270, Northern Michigan operations photographs series, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford
- PROCESSING INFORMATION:** Collection processed by Ford Motor Company Archives staff, and the staff of the Benson Ford Research Center.

Accession 1318 was incorporated into Accession 270 in 1978.
- DESCRIPTION INFORMATION:** Finding aid originally prepared and published by staff of the Benson Ford Research Center. Finding aid reformatted, converted to electronic format and republished by staff in June 2011.

Finding aid prepared using Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) and local guidelines.

HISTORICAL NOTE

Part of a plan to render the company self-sufficient, Henry Ford and the Ford Motor Company purchased over 313,000 acres of timberland and two iron mines in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan in the early 1920s. Construction of a sawmill was followed by a hydro-electric plant and drying kilns, making the facility the largest sawmill complex in the world. Ford also built a chemical plant, airfield, and new homes to attract employees. The Iron Mountain plant supplied automobile body parts and wood patterns for the production of aircraft, ships, railroad cars, and mining trams. The chemical distillery turned scrap wood into formaldehyde. Scrap wood was used to produce charcoal briquettes. In 1930, the plant was expanded to take over as the assembly plant for station wagons. During World War II the plant was retooled to produce wooden gliders for the United States Army. After the war, production of station wagons was resumed, along with the production of convertible roadsters. By 1951, however, more and more steel was used for automobile bodies, and in 1951, the plant was closed.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The **Background Materials subseries**, 1920-1951 (0.5 cubic ft.), consists of newspaper clippings concerning the opening of the Iron Mountain plant and maps of shipping routes. The **Identified Photographs subseries**, 1920-1951 (3.5 cubic ft.), is comprised of images that relate to the construction and development of Iron Mountain buildings; the design and production of the Woody Station Wagon and the Ford Glider; sawmill production methods; logging operations in Big Bay, Pequaming, and Sidnaw, Michigan; and the construction of power plants. This material visually documents not only Ford Motor Company production methods, but also sawmill production, lumber manufacturing, and logging camp life. The **Unidentified Photographs subseries**, (0.5 cubic ft.), is comprised mainly of undated images of people in both interior and exterior settings. Finally, the **Negatives subseries**, undated (3.9 cubic ft.), is comprised of unorganized and unprocessed film negatives of various sizes.

ARRANGEMENT

The Northern Michigan Operations photographs series is organized into four subseries:

- Subseries I: Background Materials
- Subseries II: Identified Photographs
 - Subsubseries A: Buildings
 - Subsubseries B: Operations
 - Subsubseries C: Other Plants
 - Subsubseries D: Iron Mountain
- Subseries III: Unidentified Photographs
- Subseries IV: Negatives

SUBJECT TERMS

Names, Personal and Corporate

Ford Motor Company. Photographic Department.
Ford Motor Company--Buildings.

Subjects

Assembly-line methods
Automobile industry and trade
Automobile industry workers
Automobile factories
Industrial buildings
Automobiles--Design and construction
Iron mines and mining--Michigan
Iron Industry
Logging--Michigan.
Lumbering--Michigan.
Lumber camps
Lumbermen
Power-plants
Sawmills--Michigan.
Station wagons
Woodies (Automobiles)
Wood in automobiles
Gliders (Aeronautics)
Aircraft industry
Chemical plants--Michigan.
Charcoal
World War, 1939-1945
Waste products
Shipping--Michigan.

Geographic

Big Bay (Mich.)
Iron Mountain (Mich.)
Pequaming (Mich.)
Sidnaw (Mich.)
Upper Peninsula (Mich.)

Genre and Form

Photograph albums.
Photographs.
Photographic prints
Maps.
Negatives.

CONTAINER LIST

Box no.	Description
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BACKGROUND MATERIALS

Box 1

Newspaper Articles and Maps, 1921, 1949 and undated

IDENTIFIED PHOTOGRAPHS

Box 1

Buildings

Body Plants, undated
Boiler Building, 1920-1921 and undated
Carbonization Building, 1924 (2 folders)
Distillation Buildings, 1924-1927
Dry Kilns, undated
Ford Commissary, undated
General Exterior Views, undated
Hydro-Electric Station, circa 1920-1927

Box 2

Hydro-Electric Station, circa 1920-1927 (photograph album, catalog number 64.167.270.4; photographs detail construction of the hydro-electric station)

Box 3

Interior Views, undated
Lumber Yards, 1920-1921 and undated
Maintenance Building and Office Building, 1920 and undated
Power House, 1923-1924 and undated (4 folders)
Sawmill, undated
Shipping Building, 1924

Box 4

Operations

Ford Glider, 1942-1944
Sawmill
“Green Parts Method”, 1924 (6 folders)
Spindle Molding, 1929
Woody Station Wagon
Design, 1943-1946 (subjects include Henry Ford II’s Sportsman vehicle (also referred to as the Estate Wagon) designed by E.T. (Bob) Gregorie; designer Doris Dickason)
Door Frame Production, 1940-1949

Iron Mountain

Street Scenes, 1926-1928

Box 5

Other Plants

Big Bay, Michigan

Buildings

Hotel and General Store, 1928 and 1944

Exterior Views, undated

Hydro Plant, 1944 and undated

Sawmill, 1944 and undated

Blueberry Mine, undated

L'Anse, Michigan, undated

Munising, Michigan, undated

Pequaming, Michigan

Buildings

Community Hall, Ford's "Cottage", Former High School, General Store,
and High School Annex, undated

Houses and Barns, undated

Power Plant and Sawmill, undated

Sidnaw, Michigan

Buildings

Logging Camp, 1926 and undated

Operations

Equipment, undated

Logging, 1925-1926 and undated

Logging Roads and Snow Conditions, 1927 and undated

UNIDENTIFIED PHOTOGRAPHS

Box 5

People, undated (subjects include old fiddler, children swimming in lake, men at a
dinner table, cooks, group photo of plant workers, people in a sailboat)

NEGATIVES

Boxes 6-21

Unprocessed negatives, undated