

DULUTH IN THE MAKING WAS JUST GOOD RAW MATERIAL

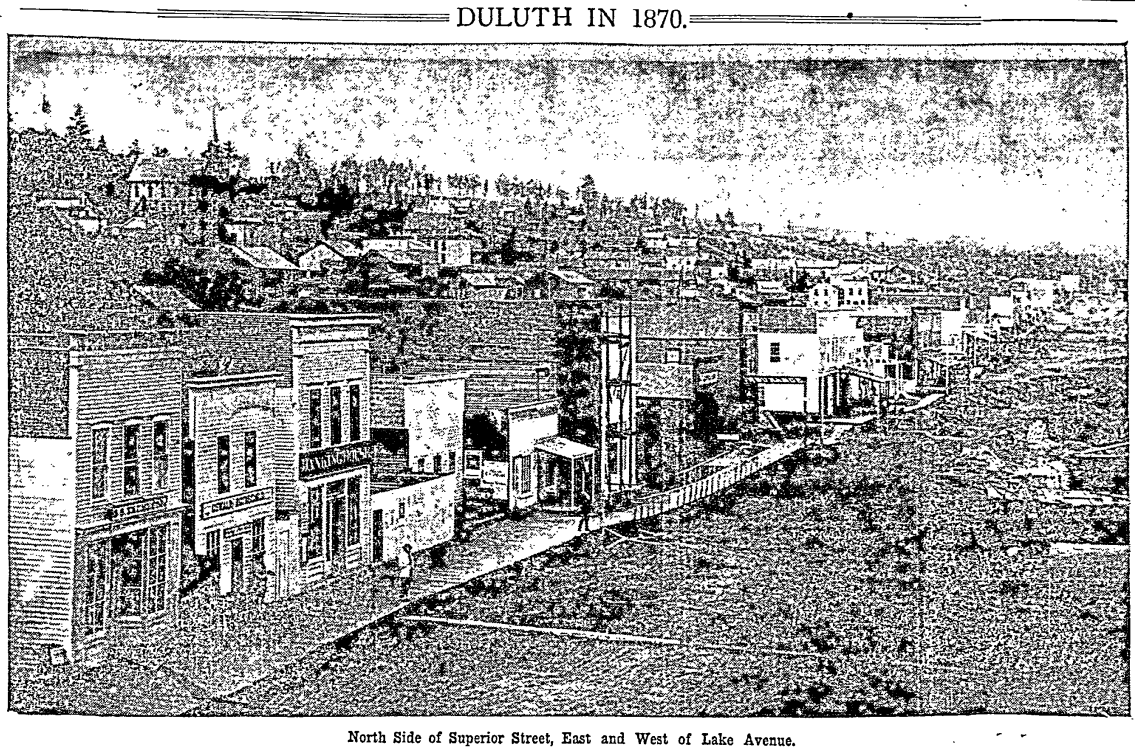
The most interesting period of the history of Duluth is that in which the first promptings of commercial expansion were responded to and the city began to grow into the proportions that have now been realized. It is scarcely credible that the whole history of the present city, which is probably the richest in proportion to its population of any in the United States, may be included within the term of 35 years; that men still living and not beyond the prime of life should distinctly remember when the present heart of the city was a dense forest. But it is the fact.

Duluth may well be dated from 1870. Prior to that was chaos. In 1869 came the first indication of a large and more or less fixed population. Almost at once the city began to figure in the greatest schemes of finance then being developed and the place grew like a mining camp. But it was a very different affair from the Duluth of today and the difficulties that must then be overcome in getting to it and the depressing appearance of the place are best described in the reminiscences of some of the pioneers of the early days, Horace Saxton, W. W. Spalding, Charles F. Johnson, George R. Stuntz and R. C. Mitchell, who all, some few years ago, set down what they remembered of the city as it was in 1870.

Commodore Stuntz, who died in 1910, shortly after telling what he remembered of the early days, came to the head of the lakes with the first of the pioneers. As to what Duluth looked like when he first saw it Commodore Stuntz said:

"There were no surveys made until 1855, and no buildings. There were traders and Indians. There were trading posts down on Minnesota Point. After '56, when people got prominent they began to build little houses. J. B. Culver built a little saw mill on the Point. I lived down on the Point in the lighthouse. I was the first man who ever put a light in the lighthouse and I lived there with my family. I brought my family here in 1855 and bought from Mr. Culver the place now occupied by Wieland's leather factory.

"I do not think there were more than 100 people located here in 1858 and they did not increase in number for a year or two. There was quite an increase in population after we commenced working on the docks. The principal occupation of the people was in clearing the land for settlement. I came over on this side from 93 Superior in 1865 and was shortly afterwards elected chairman of the town board and held the office and was also street commissioner when there were few streets. I had control at that time of all the public improvements that were made. There was no levy of taxes. I would not cut roads for anyone who would not furnish the



North Side of Superior Street, East and West of Lake Avenue.

SUPERIOR STREET WAS A FOREST GULLY

Duluth commenced about Superior street and ran from there three miles southeast down Lake Avenue and Minnesota Point. There was nothing of Duluth on the west side of Lake Avenue. There were three thoroughfares—Lake Avenue, Superior Avenue and Minnesota Avenue. In 1870, where the Spalding and Lyceum now stand, there was nothing but a forest gully. I cleared off all of two acres to fill in the gully where the center of the business district now is. In 1871 we cut through as far as Onesta, but in that year and the next Superior street was hardly passable. Windrows of logs and underbrush made it almost impossible for a foot passenger to make his

way through the mass of debris. In 1871 or '72 we had a big burning of timber and cleaned off a good deal of the heaviest of the wood."

W. W. Spalding, who gave his name to the big Duluth hostelry, came to the Lake Superior country in 1845 and was at Superior very early in the fifties. He was here before the first panic and was largely engaged in copper mining in this region. He came to Duluth to live in 1870 and opened a general store on the corner where the Spalding now is.

"I did some trading with the Indians," said Mr. Spalding years ago in recalling his first experiences, "and got my pay generally in furs. There was not much cash in circulation. There were only two or three other stores in Duluth at the time. J. C. Hunter had a store. All of our merchandise came in by boat. The Minnesota Point canal was cut through, I think, in 1872 or 1873. Superior street was practically the only street and our principal business was living on the hopes of the future and what little trade could be picked up. After the railroad came there was some business." In 1888 Mr. Spalding sold out his store and undertook the building of the hotel, which still bears his name and insures the perpetuation of his fame.

STAGING FROM ST. PAUL IN 1870

Charles F. Johnson came to Duluth by stage in the latter part of March, 1870, and the story of how he made the trip and what he found here upon his arrival—and that was in the year in which the railroad was completed—is interesting. Mr. Johnson had been living in St. Paul and was recently married. Here is his story in his own words:

"Arriving at Hinckley we found shelter in a very primitive shack made of celled lumber with a tar paper covering, which was by courtesy called a hotel. It was kept by a Mr. Baker, who was afterwards the proprietor of the Bay View house at Duluth.

"Here we spent a comfortable night as was possible with the knowledge that we had to turn out at 3 o'clock in the morning to take the stage again. Fortunately the weather proved mild for the season, but the long ride in a conveyance that was only partly covered by canvas, and in which we were embedded in hay, was monotonous and very wearisome. A man named Willard was among the passengers and he was afterwards engaged in business in Duluth under the firm name of Willard & Mercer.

"We arrived at Superior after a journey of 20 hours and put up at the Avery house. The next morning I crossed the bay and landed on Minnesota Point and stopped at Shaw & Ingalls' store.

"Duluth was then a straggling village of about a thousand people and Superior street was simply a wagon road, cut through ridges and bridged over gullies, with balustraded sidewalks over the deepest of the holes. The business had formed its nucleus on Minnesota Point, was now moving up on Superior street—for as yet there had been but slight attempt at grading any of the avenues—and consisting at the base of the Point near Lake Avenue. There were no substantial buildings on Superior street and it was partly, at least, used for residences.

"The Markells, the Nettletons, Marvins and Rays reeled on Superior street in houses of unpretentious character. Col. J. B. Culver had built a new residence, the finest house in town on First street. The Clarke house, a rather ambitious two-story frame structure, had been completed on the present site of the Metropolitan Block, but was not yet open. The Bay View house, on the present site of the Palladio, was the only 'first class' hotel running. On the lake front a small army of men were employed laying the foundations for a grain elevator and constructing a breakwater in front of it, towards which the Lake Superior & Mississippi railroad was constructing approaches of heavy crib work and stone. Between the breakwater and the Bay View hotel were a goodly number of business houses of the usual frame store-front pattern. Of these J. C. Hunter's was located farthest east, with a stock of general merchandise, and W. W. Spalding's was the farthest west. The Spalding store was on the site of the Spalding hotel."

"Scattered between these extremes were C. Frazier, Peter Dean, John Drew, Ed Nash, Hunter & Cottrell, Sawyer & Davis, the banking house of General George B. Sargent, with real estate offices too numerous to mention and saloons to an unlimited number sandwiched in between.

"I met a number of men whom I had known in St. Paul and others to whom I had letters of introduction and I found them all equally busy buying and selling, hauling and building, planning and scheming—not only for themselves but for the new city at the head of Lake Superior, which was just then on the eve of its first great boom."

"The building up of the first boom's collapse and the utter smashing of the hopes of Duluth are told of by R. C. Mitchell, in his reminiscences of early journalism. Mr. Mitchell had established the Tribune at Superior and moved it over unceremoniously to Duluth, May 1, 1870. He says:

BLOWING UP AND BURSTING THE BUBBLE

"It (the Tribune) at once became prosperous, and in a few months was so crowded with advertising that in the following August I was obliged to enlarge the weekly to an eight-column folio, and even then, notwithstanding its increase in size, hardly a week passed when it was not necessary, on account of the pressure of advertising, to keep out a great deal of news matter. At that time every one advertised; everything was so unsettled that the newspaper was the mouthpiece of all sorts and conditions of people. Draymen, wood sawyers, washer women, plasterers, carpenters, professional people—all advertised. Merchants advertised with boundless liberality. The Tribune continued to be published as a weekly until May 15, 1872, and then the great volume of business arising from the phenomenal growth of the young city dictated the publication of a six-column daily paper. Accordingly, in addition to the weekly Tribune, I commenced on that date the publication of the Duluth Tribune, every evening except Sunday, giving the Associated Press dispatches. During 1870-2 the Tribune never had less than 15 employees. The Minnesota also did a fair business, that being the only other paper published.

"The state of the newspapers indicated the state of the town. Everyone

was rich or getting rich and things went on this way until the news came of the failure of Jay Cooke. The town was bound up in the schemes of the financier and was the first to feel the effect of the failure and to feel it most bitterly—though it presented a smash for the whole country. Business was almost wholly suspended and at once. This is not an easy thing to appreciate now when there are so many diverse interests to protect the public against a general smash. When Jay Cooke failed it was as though the heavens had fallen.

"Newspapers, like everything else, were obliged to quit galloping and be content with creeping, and finally, in 1873, the effect upon the Tribune was felt so keenly that I stopped the publication of the daily and continued only the weekly. When the full effects of the panic were felt probably four-fifths of the business men either failed or stopped doing business to avoid impending failure, and for the two years following, one printer, a small firm and myself composed the entire force of the Tribune. The weekly it was even necessary to reduce to a five-column folio. The news matter was sad and advertising scarce. And it was not until 1878 that matters improved enough to warrant me in taking over the Minnesota."

George R. Stuntz, who was intimately connected with more of the greater events of Duluth's early history than any other individual, recalled some years ago how Jay Cooke came into the development scheme at the head of the lake. As surveyor and explorer Mr. Stuntz had been connected with the expansion work at Duluth and Superior from the very first. He surveyed a great portion of the country near Lake Superior in both Minnesota and Wisconsin and was a large landowner. He was quoted as saying:

HOW JAY COOKE CAME TO BOOM DULUTH

"The permanent growth of Duluth commenced in 1867 and 1868 with the beginning of construction on the Lake Superior & Mississippi road. Although

the lumber interests then undeveloped; the grain producing quality of the land for a thousand miles to the west; the unlimited supply of food fish in Lake Superior as well as in the 10,000 interior lakes in Minnesota, and last, but not least, to the timber supply here. After investigating these matters for several weeks he said to me: 'I had interested up the whole of the country to go up and give Duluth a start for a few years.' I said, 'I will make you interested; I will sell you 40 lots in upper and lower Duluth for a thousand dollars,' and he gave me a check and I wrote out the deed.

Shortly after this I had occasion to visit Washington. General Sargent accompanied me as far as Philadelphia and there I stopped for the night and in the morning I met Montgomery, an agent who had been up here in 1868 examining the slate formation on the St. Louis river above Thomson. He told me there was a man in the city who wanted to see me.

"If you are going to stop in the city today," he said, "I will take you to him and give you an introduction. I consented and about 10 o'clock we started down Walnut street to Jay Cooke's bank. Montgomery had told me on the way from the hotel that Mr. Cooke had been solicited to raise money to complete the road. I introduced to Mr. Cooke.

"I understand," he said, "you are a surveyor and acquainted with the country between Duluth and St. Paul. I am told that the road has a grant of ten sections to the mile from the general land supply of the United States. What is the present and prospective value of this grant?"

"I told him that I had been over the route for several years and that the country was well watered; that from 20 to 25 miles out from St. Paul it was rather a sandy surface; and told him the possibilities of wealth as the route came up towards the head of the lakes; that if this road was completed the land would be worth from 10 to 15 dollars an acre; that from Pine City to Duluth there was a growth of pine that would be worth three dollars a thousand and that there was from eight to forty thousand feet per acre.

"A few weeks later Cooke negotiated the bonds and General Sargent concluded to come to Duluth and did come in May, 1869, bringing funds, furnished by E. W. Clarke & Co., bankers of Philadelphia, and Jay Cooke & Co. to build the Clarke house, the Bay View house and the Episcopal church. On the fifteenth of May, 1869, I laid out the lot upon which the Clarke house was built in a dense forest of cedar and fir. I remember well that the snow was two feet deep in places.

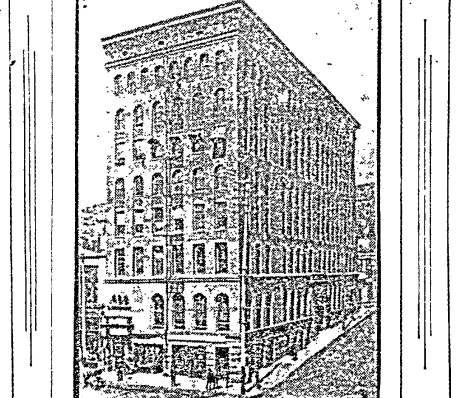
"These events started business in Duluth and 1868 was an eventful year for the future city."

How eventful it was it is not necessary to let Mr. Stuntz feel farther. It is worthy of remark, though, that the local situation was looking up and the Weekly Minnesota was moved to print a paragraph requesting that the parties who had surreptitiously borrowed the public money return it to the authorities as it was necessary to carrying out some contemplated public improvements.



Bay View Hotel in 1870 Occupying the Site of the Palladio.

PALLADIO BUILDING IN 1906.



Built on the Site of the Bay View Hotel.

Farm and Timber Lands

6,000 Acres Farming lands in townships 51 and 52, range 12, St. Louis county, will sell for \$8 to \$10 per acre in tracts to suit on easy payments.

20,000 Acres Of fertile farming lands in St. Louis county, adjoining Cloquet river, will sell in tracts to suit on easy payments at \$8 per acre. This is all level land and of the richest soil. Most of it has timber growing; if cut, would pay for the land. Also have 21 claims of fir timber in Douglas county, Oregon, adjoining Smith river; will sell for \$17 per acre. These claims have from 4,000,000 to 8,000,000 feet of fir per acre. These tracts are bargains, considering the present price of lumber; also have large amount of valuable residence property in West Duluth; sell on easy payments; most of this is particularly adapted for working people.

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