

FRANK HIBBING

Although seventeen years have passed since the death of Frank Hibbing, there are few men now in the prime of their powers whose activities have more the character of permanence than the interests which have endured to perpetuate the name of this honored citizen of northern Minnesota. One of the most prosperous little cities in the iron district bears his name, he was widely known in business and financial circles, and in the early days was one of the most expert lumbermen. While death interrupted his career at the age of forty, he had already accomplished achievements that would satisfy the ambition of most men at the end of threescore and ten, and left behind him not only a faultless record for business integrity but the memory of many good deeds and kindly actions and the love and esteem of friends and acquaintances everywhere.

FRANK HIBBING was born at Kirchboitzen, Hanover, Germany, December 14, 1856, and spent his early life and received his education in his native country. At the age of 18, having determined to seek his fortunes in the United States, he immigrated and first located at Beaver Dam, WI. He was without capital, and had only the strength of his hands and the courage of his determination to commend himself to others. He worked for a time on a farm and then for a time in a shingle mill, where he met with an accident which took off three fingers from his right hand, leaving on the thumb and little finger. He then went into the law office of Mr. W. W. Hazeltine at Stevens Point, WI, but becoming convinced that he was better adapted to business than to professional life he abandoned the study of law. He found a congenial work, in which he became particularly skillful, in timber cruising, and in 1885 went to Bessemer, and while there laid out the north side of Bessemer Town for Dan Merritt. He acquired his early experience as an iron ore prospector while there, and in 1887 located at Duluth, embarked in the real estate business, and for about one year was also engaged in exploring the Vermillion Range. In the meantime he had experienced many of the vicissitudes of fortune, had worked hard and made money, but had lost by reverses, and was consequently at the bottom of the ladder when he became identified with the ranger country about Duluth.

After some discoveries had been made on the eastern Mesaba Range Mr. HIBBING undertook extensive exploration work in the same district, tramping over the entire range, then a dense wilderness, and carrying his supplies and tools in a pack on his back. While others were directing their attention to the east end of the Mesaba, he pushed on further west and soon discovered surface indications which led him to believe in the existence of extensive iron deposits. Tests were made which confirmed his theory, and in association with Mr. A. J. TRIMBLE he proceeded at once to secure options for leases on a large tract of land in that vicinity. In the face of the important discoveries at Mountain Iron, Bewabik and Virginia, the field in which Mr. HIBBING was operating was neglected and he was about the only one that had faith in the prospects. One January 12, 1892 he headed a party through the wilderness to reach the location of his new discoveries in section 22, 58-20. There were many who deemed his confidence unwarranted and considered his movements those of a mere adventurer. He possessed the courage of the true pioneer, and eventually the land secured by him and



bing to the new location in South Hibbing. At the same time he helped in the operation of the Morris Crushing and Screening Plant. In December, 1919, Mr. Curley took up his present duties at Chisholm.

He is a member of the Engineers Club of Northern Minnesota, is a Republican and a member of the Catholic Church.

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movements those of a mere adventurer. He possessed the courage of the true pioneer, and eventually the land secured by him and his associates became the site for the now famous group of mines known as the Lake Superior Group, which were discovered and later developed by Mr. Hibbing and others. In July, 1893, the town site of Hibbing was platted, and the name was given in honor of the discoverer of the mines in that section, and in view of later developments it can be asserted that few "fathers of towns" stood by a community more loyally and liberally than the late Mr. Hibbing. He had established the first sawmill for the manufacture of lumber, and from that time until his death was liberal in his dealings with the community and took a personal interest and pride in building up the town. In January, 1894, the citizens realized the pressing need of a water plant, and in the absence of funds and credit by which the village might provide such an improvement Mr. Hibbing himself advanced the money for the erection of the plant, and also used his personal means in many other ways to provide needed improvements, including the construction of an electric light plant. He also built and owned the first hotel, and in association with Mr. Trimble established the first bank and erected a bank building.

The editor of the Hibbing News, who had become acquainted with Mr. Hibbing soon after the town was started, has recalled some of the personal characteristics which, in addition to his generosity, well illustrate the reason for his lasting popularity in the community. He says: "As I remember him then, on the eve of the most prosperous period of his life's history, he was the same good-natured, big-hearted, genial man that his friends have ever since found him to be. He was ambitious to obtain a competency sufficient to make himself and family comfortable in after years; but when this had been accomplished he was satisfied. His success did not turn his head nor cause him to look with disdain upon his friends who had been less fortunate in their financial ventures; he bore the honors of his good fortune manfully and without any of that pompous display of vanity so characteristic of human weakness and selfish pride. He had ever taken a personal interest and pride in the upbuilding and advancement of Hibbing, and his has been the most successful and liberal policy adopted in the conduct of any of the towns on the Mesaba Range. There are many people engaged in successful business here today who are indebted largely to Mr. Hibbing for the measure of success they have achieved."

For the last twelve years of his life Mr. Hibbing had his home in Duluth. His faith and persistence in developing the mines of the Mesaba Range were well rewarded, and although he had sold a half interest in some of his holdings for upwards of a quarter of a million dollars, at the time of his death he still retained substantial interests on the Range, the benefits of which have inured to his family. He had few superiors as a business man, and at Duluth he was known as one of the men not only of remarkable enterprise, but of a public spirit which was considered invaluable in the progress of that city. This was well reflected in a resolution passed by the Chamber of Commerce after his death. The following extracts from those resolutions indicate the importance of his relations to the business community and an estimate of his personal character: "The enterprises in which Mr. Hibbing has been engaged have been of great benefit to the city, and those in which he was interested at the time of his death promise even greater results than those brought to a successful issue by his enterprise, perseverance and skill. In addition to his business ability, his strict honesty, sterling integrity, unswerving loyalty to his adopted city and unbounded faith in its future he combined a



happy disposition and a truly generous character, so much so that it would be hard to find another person so generally respected by all classes of citizens. Men of the faith and enterprise of Mr. Hibbing are the builders of the fortunes of any city that may be fortunate enough to be honored by their residence, and we feel that the City of Duluth has suffered great loss."

An additional comment on his generosity is found in a brief quotation from a local newspaper of Duluth: "The news of the death of no man in Duluth would be received with greater sorrow than that of Frank Hibbing. His friends are found in every walk of life. His hand has always been ready to extend assistance to others in their distress and the worthy person never asked his aid in vain. The poor who have received coal and provisions from him when cold and hunger were knocking at their doors are without number, and they have reason to appreciate fully the sincerity of his charity, for he gave without ostentation, satisfied with having done a good deed without advertising his virtue to the world."

Originally a Democrat, in his later years Mr. Hibbing was a Republican, and at one time served as town treasurer of Bessemer, Michigan. He attended at different times the Methodist Episcopal and Episcopal Churches. Fraternally he belonged to the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, Lodge No. 133, and his funeral was conducted under the auspices of that organization. He also belonged to the Kitchi Gammi Club of Duluth, but was essentially a home man and cared for his home more than for any club or fraternity.

Frank Hibbing died July 30, 1897. On May 14, 1885, he married Miss Barbara Lutz. She was born at Eckartsweier, Amt Kehl, Baden, on the Rhine, Germany, a member of a family which had been located on the River Rhine for generations. She came to the United States in 1874 with her parents, Michael and Barbara Lutz, and settled at Stevens Point, Wisconsin. Mrs. Hibbing, who survives her husband and resides at 1830 East Superior street, has enjoyed a position of especial esteem in Duluth's social circles and has done much to continue the beneficence practiced by her husband through varied interests and forms of practical philanthropy. Mrs. Hibbing had shared with her husband many of his early hardships, and it was one of his regrets in his last hours that their companionship should be interrupted after they had passed over the roughest part of the road of life and had reached a position where together they might enjoy in peace and comfort the ample fruits of his toil. No children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Hibbing, but they adopted in her infancy Anna Marie, the daughter of Mrs. Hibbing's brother. This daughter graduated from the Duluth Central High School and from LaSall Seminary at Auburndale, Massachusetts, spent some time in Germany and recently married Dr. Hermann M. Koller, of Minneapolis.

~~FREDERICK H. CASH, JR., assistant general superintendent of the Mesaba Range Mines of the Republic Iron and Steel Company, lives in Kinney, where he maintains his headquarters. He was born at Hume, Edgar County, Illinois, July 31, 1884, a son of Frederick H. and Laura (Owens) Cash. Frederick H. Cash, Sr., was born at Kansas, Illinois, in 1854, and is a retired farmer. His wife was born at Sedalia, Missouri, in 1859. They were married in 1876 and became the parents of four children, of whom the son Frederick is the second in order of birth.~~

~~Frederick H. Cash, Jr., attended the county schools near Hume and the Hume High School, having graduated from the latter in 1899. From that date until 1903 he was engaged on an Illinois farm. In September~~