Timber and Mining

A Tale of Two Industries

The Upper Peninsula's extensive forests were essential for the fledgling mining industry.

Timber was used in all methods and eras of mining. It stoked steam locomotives, was cut for railroad ties, burned to make charcoal for forges and furnaces, assembled into headframes and cribbing, and built into huge ore docks.

The furnaces which produced the iron ate up charcoal by the thousands of bushels and the charcoal pits consumed the forests by thousands of acres.

About 330,000 acres were cut in 50 years. By 1903 the furnaces of the Upper Peninsula were using 10,000 acres or (15.6 square miles) of woodland each year, an average of 30 acres every day of the year.

Panoramic view of Pioneer, Jackson and Powerhouse Locations - Negaunee, early 1900's

Timber Supports at the Athens Mine, Negaunee

Duluth, South Shore and Atlantic ore train at early Marquette lower harbor ore docks.

Carp River charcoal kilns, Marquette

Deer Lake Furnace, Ishpeming

Early wood timber shaft

Steam locomotive and loggers

Photo: Superior View

Photo: Superior View

Photo: Superior View

Photo: Michigan Iron Industry Museum