

## **HISTORY OF BESSEMER Michigan** *as written in the 1888* **Business & Mining Directory**

Bessemer, the county seat of Gogebic County Michigan, is one of the liveliest and most substantial places on the range. It is the oldest town and its growth since first platted has been phenomenal

A few explorers settled here in 1884 but the real growth did not begin until the following year. The spring of that year, 1884, witnessed a rapid development. The Milwaukee Lake -Shore & Western Railroad had pushed into Bessemer late the previous fall and had continued on toward its destination at Ashland. With it came hundreds of people to populate and explore this wonderful region.

A large share of these settled at Bessemer and began to clear off the lots and build and soon a thriving settlement began to appear among the forests of this northern county. It has continued ever since to grow until a beautiful little city is the result.

Among the earliest settlers were P H Dolan, Boarding House; Jeffres & Mickleson, hardware & general store; Ehrmanneraur Bros., meat market; Hessmer & Long, Colby House; Frank Hiffing, , L E Fope & C D Fronier.

They were rapidly followed by hundreds of others until the population reaches into the thousands.

Like all other range towns however, its energies have been concentrated upon the iron industries. With the exception of the machine shops of Chas. McCann, and the manufacture of powder, no manufacturing industries exist. As the future advances there is no doubt that the industries will become more diversified.

At least the partial reduction of the iron ore found here in such large quantities is one of the probabilities of the near future. And, as Bessemer offers very fine inducements to those who contemplate the erection of furnaces here, she will no doubt secure them.

Bessemer is finely situated on the north slope of Colby Hill with a gradual yet sufficient drainage to the north. Protected by the winds on all sides by high bluffs, which are beautiful as well as useful, and situated in the midst of a stately forest, it is beyond doubt one of the most picturesque and lovely areas for a city in the northwest.

Its natural beauty is added to by the public improvements which its energetic officials have carried out. In this respect, Bessemer is not surpassed by any town on the range. Its streets & highways are beyond question the finest in Gogebic county. They are well graded, well drained and kept in perfect condition and bordered by substantial plank sidewalks.

During the past year a fine system of waterworks has been completed, furnishing ample protection in case of fire. There is a well organized and fully equipped fire department.

Over three miles of mains have been laid, with hydrants at convenient intervals throughout town.

A beautiful high school building has been erected on the slope of Colby Hill costing \$10,000, and will accommodate from 300 to 400 children.

A substantial City Hall building has been erected post summer, the first floor will be used by the fire dept & the second floor for city purposes.

There are one Roman Catholic & three Protestant churches in existence. Two church buildings have been erected one by the Roman Catholic and one by one of the Presbyterians. The law abiding portion of the population predominates here: the place being noted for being quiet & orderly.

The mineral resources surrounding this place are inexhaustible. The largest mine on the Gogebic Range is situated almost within the limits of the town. The Colby was the first mine discovered on the range. It has a north & south vein with the largest deposit of one yet found, being in the aggregate 250 feet wide. Six hundred thousand tons of ore have already been taken out of this mine and there is not the slightest evidence of any contraction of the deposit.

Besides the Colby, there are in close proximity to the town the Palms, anvil, Iron ton, Puritan, Blue jacket and First National ...all shipping mines of more or less magnitude, beside a number of partially developed properties that will become shippers in the course of the following season.

With all of these vast mineral resources almost within her borders, and with a fine agricultural region surrounding her that will ultimately be reduced to cultivation, Bessemer has a bright future before her.

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