

The waters of Iron Mountain Lake were pumped to the top of a neighboring mountain (Reservoir Hill) where it was stored in a small depression which had been blasted out of solid granite. A steam pump was located at the dam and fired with wood and coal, furnishing the power for pumping the water to the hilltop. After a period of years it was decided to construct a larger reservoir. The solid rock summit of this mountain made excavation too difficult and a concrete reservoir was built upon the solid rock summit, and consisted of walls 14 feet above the surface. Ten inch iron pipes led from the pump at the dam to the reservoir, with 12 inch pipes leading down the mountainside, across the valley and to the mine. This water to the mine built up a tremendous gravity flow pressure of from 140 to 160 pounds, and water hoses had to be anchored to tables and held down by several men while hydraulicking the dirt from the ore. Then the ore went to the separator to be rolled, rattled, and shaken over screens and jigs. At every stage in this process some ore, being heavier than the rock, dropped out until finally the tailings contained only a small per cent of mineral. The product of the mine lost 15 per cent of its weight in the washing process and 20 per cent in the separator, but the process paid. One man with his stationary hose could hydraulic a thousand tons a week, and the separator did its work as rapidly as the carts could unload into the mouth of the revolving funnel. Iron manufacturers liked their ore cleaned. It saved the cost of reducing clay and rock along with the metal. Some of the ore came from the separator in pieces the size of macadam, and some were as small as grains of corn. There were five sizes, but they were all mixed together from the market, and they graded from 60 to 65 percent iron.