

DICKERSON IRON ORE MINES.

FINALLY, AFTER 175 YEARS, THE VEIN
HAS BEEN EXHAUSTED.

MIDDLETOWN, N. Y., Dec. 18.—The recent final discontinuance of ore digging at the old Dickerson Mines in Morris County, N. J., is an event of historic interest. Those mines are the oldest in the State, having been first worked by Joseph Kirkbride, a Quaker resident of Bucks County, Penn., in 1716, or 175 years ago. It was fifty years later before any other important mines were opened in the region, and during those earlier years of the iron-producing industry the primitive blast furnaces that were set up in Morris and Sussex Counties, N. J., and in Orange County, N. Y., got most of the ore they used from the Dickerson Mines. In transporting the ore for long distances to the smelting furnaces over rough mountain roads it was not infrequently packed in bags and slung across the backs of horses.

The Sterling and Forest of Dean Furnaces, in the Town of Monroe, Orange County, which were established, respectively, in 1751 and 1761, long relied upon the Dickerson Mines for their main supplies of ore. During the Revolutionary war the cannons cast by these furnaces for the Continental Army were largely made from the product of the Dickerson Mines, as were also the huge links of the great iron chain which was stretched across the Hudson River at Fort Montgomery to impede the passage of the British fleet above that point.

Immediately after the Revolutionary war the heirs of Joseph Kirkbride, the original owner, sold the mines to Jonathan Dickerson, father of Gov. Mahlon Dickerson of New-Jersey, and the ownership has since remained in the Dickerson family. About two years ago the ore from the mines began to depreciate both in quantity and quality, and the depreciation kept on until the beds failed altogether to yield paying ore.

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