Stories that Touch Our Lives

Perhaps you saw the headline “Twelve miners die after underground explosion: a community mourns their loss.” After reading about the events at West Virginia’s Sago Mine last January, I felt sorrow for the people involved in the tragedy and also a sense of amazement at the risks workers still face in acquiring the natural resources that keep our society running. The history of copper mining on the Keweenaw Peninsula is filled with stories similar to this recent tragedy. What is regarded as the worst mining disaster in the Keweenaw copper region occurred at the Osceola mine in 1895. Thirty-five workers, including several young boys, died that day after a fire broke out in the Number 3 shaft. While there have been incredible changes in technology and attitudes towards worker safety since the Osceola fire, the Sago Mine disaster shows that mining remains a dangerous activity.

Prior to the creation of the safety laws and rules that regulate our workplaces, mining accidents were considered the fault of a reckless or careless miner - and accidents were common. Mine workers fell into open shafts, were crushed by unstable rock, killed by fires and explosions. Deaths were routinely reported in local newspapers. Note this graphic excerpt from the April 22, 1910 edition of the Calumet News: “John Nowak, a timberman, was instantly killed yesterday about the noon hour by being struck with a falling piece of timber at the 99th level of the No. 5 shaft, Calumet branch of the CIC H mine. The timber fell from the 94th level and had thus fallen a distance of 800 feet before it struck the unfortunate man, crushing his head to a pulp.” Injuries and deaths affected more than just the victims and their families, often reaching deep into communities.

Mining also carried other common occupational hazards, such as hearing loss from the deafening sound of drilling and blindness caused by rock chips flying into the eye. While mining companies tried in some cases to keep injured workers employed, no laws required them to do so. Many families lived in company-owned houses and their ability to stay in their homes was dependent on a member of the family working for the mine. Before it became illegal, young boys often started working for the mining company after their father had been killed or seriously injured in order to keep the roof over their heads. In the days before worker’s compensation, fraternal organizations and societies such as the Freemasons or Independent Order of Oddfellows provided care for the families of injured or deceased miners. Over time, people began to define their rights as workers and demand safer working conditions, fueling an interest in unions and laws that worked to enhance and protect their safety.

Despite the changes that have occurred in the mining industry over the last 100 years, it still sometimes takes a tragedy to make us question if there is more that can be done to protect workers. Just weeks after the tragedy at the Sago coal mine, West Virginia’s governor and legislators created a law that required mines to have larger oxygen supplies for miners trapped underground. While we will never know if this law would have made a difference had it been in place prior to the accident, it was a way to address concerns and deal with a collective sense of grief.

(continued on page 7)
Visitor Services And Facilities

**KEWEENAW NHP INFORMATION DESK**
Located in the entrance to the Quincy Mine Gift Shop, a staffed National Park Service information desk provides information on Keweenaw National Historical Park and the Keweenaw Heritage Sites. Phone (906) 482-0630 June 24 to August 12, Monday through Friday – 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Sunday –12:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**PARK HEADQUARTERS**
Keweenaw National Park Headquarters, located in the historic Calumet & Hecla Mining Company General Office Building on Red Jacket Road in Calumet, has a staffed reception desk and sales area to provide park information. Open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to Noon and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**FOOD AND RESTAURANTS**
A variety of restaurants are located throughout the Keweenaw Peninsula. Grocery stores are also available in all major communities.

**CAMPING**
Numerous camping options, including both primitive and developed sites, are available across the Keweenaw Peninsula. Public campgrounds are available at Fort Wilkins, McLain and Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Parks. Private campgrounds are also available. For more information, contact the Keweenaw Convention and Visitors Bureau at 1-800-338-7982 or www.keweenawinfo.com.

**TRANSPORTATION**

**Access to**
The Keweenaw NHP Information Desk and Keweenaw National Historical Park Headquarters are accessible. Many other park facilities located in historic structures are not fully accessible at this time. Projects are underway to make more park facilities accessible in the near future. Visit our information desk or contact the park to check on the current accessibility of the park and Keweenaw Heritage Sites prior to your visit.

**Exploring the Keweenaw**
The most difficult decision you may have while visiting the Keweenaw Peninsula is deciding what to do and when. Whether you have half a day or a week, there are plenty of places to visit, relax, and learn. The following is a list of suggestions and ways to organize your visit on the Keweenaw Peninsula. Calumet and Houghton tourist information 1-800-338-7982.

**Arriving and Getting Oriented**
Visit the Keweenaw National Historical Park Information Desk at the Quincy Mine Gift Shop to learn about the park and Keweenaw Heritage Sites. Here you can acquire more detailed information on points of interest.

**Enjoying Natural Scenery**
State, county and township parks offer a wide range of options from extended overnight backpacking trips to short day hikes and picnicking. There are also waterfalls to view, kayaking tours, and beaches for relaxing on warm summer days.

**Enjoying Cultural History**
Visit the local historical societies and museums to learn about the rich cultural heritage of the area. These points of interest are staffed by knowledgeable volunteers and offer a variety of perspectives on life in the Keweenaw Peninsula.

**Staying Safe**
During any of your excursions, be mindful of old mining sites. Such sites often contain old machinery and buried mine entrances – all of which could pose visible and unforeseen hazards.

**Respecting Private Property**
Please be considerate of private property. Many abandoned mining sites and homes are in private ownership and require owner permission prior to visiting. To learn more about such sites and the distinction between federal, state and private property, visit the Keweenaw National Historical Park Information Desk at the Quincy Mine Hoist. See above for days and hours of operation.

**Recommended Stay**
You should allow three days to visit all of the Keweenaw Heritage Sites. You may wish to add a few more days to fully enjoy the Keweenaw Peninsula.

**Trails and Roads**
Walking tour guide brochures for the Calumet Historic Business District, the Calumet & Hecla Industrial Area, and the Laurium Historic Residential Area are available at Park Headquarters and the Keweenaw Convention and Visitors Bureau located on U.S. Highway 41 in Calumet, Michigan.

The National Park Service cares for the natural and cultural resources relating to the copper mining industry for the enjoyment and benefit of current and future generations through cooperative efforts and partnerships with state and local governments, public and private entities.

**Keweenaw National Historical Park**
Keweenaw National Historical Park was established to preserve and interpret the Keweenaw Peninsula. Public campgrounds are available at Fort Wilkins, McLain and Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Parks. Private campgrounds are also available. For more information, contact the Keweenaw Convention and Visitors Bureau at 1-800-338-7982 or www.keweenawinfo.com.

**Mailing Address**
Keweenaw National Historical Park
PO Box 471, 25970 Red Jacket Road
Calumet, Michigan 49913

**E-mail**
KEWENews@nps.gov

**Website**
www.nps.gov/kewe

**Park Headquarters**
(906) 337-3168

**Fax Number**
(906) 337-3169

**2006 Keweenaw Ingot**
Editing and Design: Dan Johnson
Contributors: Tom Baikie, Jill Burkland, Frank Fiala, Abby Sue Fisher, Kathleen Harter, Kim Hoagland, Dan Johnson, Gary Kaunonen, John Rosumegy, Jo Loizou
Printed by American Color Graphics, Shakopee, MN

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

**Keweenaw Weather**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Average High Temperature</th>
<th>Average Low Temperature</th>
<th>Record High/Low Temperature</th>
<th>Average Precipitation</th>
<th>Average Snowfall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>21.7ºF</td>
<td>8.5ºF</td>
<td>43ºF / -26ºF</td>
<td>4.21 inches</td>
<td>70.9 inches</td>
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<td>February</td>
<td>23.6ºF</td>
<td>9.5ºF</td>
<td>56ºF / -25ºF</td>
<td>2.28 inches</td>
<td>34.0 inches</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>32.3ºF</td>
<td>17.9ºF</td>
<td>65ºF / -21ºF</td>
<td>2.4 inches</td>
<td>23.6 inches</td>
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<td>April</td>
<td>46.3ºF</td>
<td>30.0ºF</td>
<td>88ºF / 0ºF</td>
<td>1.71 inches</td>
<td>7.7 inches</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>61.4ºF</td>
<td>41.2ºF</td>
<td>95ºF / 20ºF</td>
<td>2.62 inches</td>
<td>1.1 inches</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>70.5ºF</td>
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<td>90ºF / 31ºF</td>
<td>2.85 inches</td>
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<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>75.7ºF</td>
<td>56.0ºF</td>
<td>102ºF / 36ºF</td>
<td>3.07 inches</td>
<td>0 inches</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>73.3ºF</td>
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Weather forecasts and warnings for Keweenaw National Historical Park and vicinity can be heard on NOAA Weather Radio WXK-73 broadcasting at 162.400 MHz.

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Join the Isle Royale Natural History Association

The Isle Royale Natural History Association, in partnership with the National Park Service, promotes the public’s understanding and appreciation of Keweenaw National Historical Park and Isle Royale National Park through education and research.

By publishing and selling products about Keweenaw National Historical Park and Isle Royale National Park, we educate people about these special places and raise funds that are reinvested in the parks to support research and interpretive programs. Every year the Isle Royale Natural History Association contributes approximately $25,000 in cash and in-kind aid to the two parks.

You Can Help

You can support the work of the Isle Royale Natural History Association and our partner parks by becoming a contributing member of our organization.

Tax Deductible Membership levels are:

Level          Amount
---           ------
Life           $1000 (Payable in 5 installments)
Benefactor     $500
Patron         $250
Supporting     $100
Supporting     $50
Household      $30
Individual     $20

Isle Royale Natural History Association Member Benefits

- A 10% discount on all purchases from Isle Royale Natural History Association bookstores and other national park visitor centers throughout the U.S.
- 3 issues of the Wolfe Eye Newsletter
- Copies of park newspapers, The Keweenaw Ingot and The Greenshore
- Special invitations to park programs, events and activities
- An opportunity to participate in the IRNHA membership e-mail list

Become a member today! Call us at 1-800-678-6925, or join online at www.irnha.org

Keweenaw Mementos

Want to learn more about Keweenaw National Historical Park? Check out these items available from the Isle Royale Natural History Association. Sales outlets are located at the Keweenaw National Historical Park Headquarters in Calumet or the Isle Royale National Park Visitor Center on the waterfront in Houghton. Association members receive a 10% discount on every purchase.

Historic Postcards

30¢ each or 4 for $1
Four photos from the Keweenaw National Historical Park archives, showing downtown Calumet’s Fifth Street in 1899, C&H Stamp Mill in the 1890s, men on the roof of the Quincy Hoist House in 1920, and miners with mass copper at the Quincy Mine in 1925.

Copper Country Road Trips

By Larry Molloy
Enjoy Keweenaw history from the comfort of your car. Complete directions, maps and photos of historic sites of Michigan’s Keweenaw Peninsula. Spiral bound.

Self-Guided Geologic Field Trip to the Keweenaw Peninsula

By Theodore J. Bornhorst & William I. Rose
Travel directions, maps, diagrams and explorations for exploring the geological formations of the Keweenaw Peninsula on your own. Spiral bound.

National Parks on the Great Lakes

By Ron Thomson and Raymond L. Breun
Information and large color photos of National Parks, Lakeshores and Historic Sites on Lake Superior, Lake Michigan and Lake Erie, including Keweenaw National Historical Park and Isle Royale National Park.

Is This an Agate?

By Susan Robinson
An illustrated guide to Lake Superior’s beach stones helps you identify the common rocks and minerals found on the Keweenaw’s Lake Superior shoreline. Beautiful color illustrations.

Cradle to Grave

By Larry Lankton
A well-researched and very readable account of the rise and decline of the copper mining industry in Michigan’s Keweenaw Peninsula. Winner of the 1992 Great Lakes History Prize.

Michigan History Magazine: The Unique U.P.

$6.95
A special issue of Michigan History Magazine devoted to Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. An exploration of the Upper Peninsula and the places and people that make it unique. Packed with interesting stories and great photos both current and historical.

Beyond the Boundaries

$22.00
By Larry Lankton
Examine everyday life on the mining frontier. A book about men, women, children and families, including their workplaces, homes, stores, churches, schools, hospitals and other aspects of community life.

Michigan’s Copper Country: The Keweenaw National Historical Park Video

$19.95 VHS, $21.95 DVD
A video trip to the heritage sites of Keweenaw National Historical Park: Historic Calumet, Quincy Mine Hoist and Underground Mine, Hoist House in 1920, and miners with mass copper at the Quincy Mine in 1925.

Keewenaw National Historical Park Medallion

$9.95
This limited edition commemorative medallion is made of solid copper with bas relief artwork. It is 2 1/2” in diameter and comes in a clear protective collector’s case.

Shop today at www.irnha.org or by phone: 1-800-678-6925. Don’t forget that association members receive a 10% discount!
Keweenaw National Historical Park preserves places and stories that mark the rise, development, and fall of the region’s copper mining industry. This industry played a key role in the industrialization of America. The National Park Service works with a collection of sites owned and operated by states and local governments, private busi-
nesses and non-profit organizations to tell the larger story of copper mining. Each of these sites allows you to explore the rise copper mining played in people’s lives here and after. The Keweenaw Heritage Sites embody stories of hardship, struggle, ingenuity, hope and success.

Keweenaw Convention and Visitors Bureau
The Keweenaw Convention and Visitors Bureau works with the National Park Service to provide travel information and reservation services for Keweenaw National Historical Park and the area.
Location: 450 North Calumet Avenue, Calumet, Michigan
Open: Year Round
Call: (906) 337-4579
Toll-Free: 1-800-338-7982
www.keweenaw.info

A.E. Seaman Mineral Museum
Explore the Keweenaw Peninsula’s geology and copper story through exhibits and an extensive mineral collection.
Location: Michigan Technological University, 5th Floor of Electrical Engineering, 1400 Townsend Drive, Houghton, Michigan
Open: Year Round
Call: (906) 482-6125
Toll-Free: 1-800-338-7982
www.michigan.gov/crhm

Copperport Mining Museum
Exhibits provide insights into operations at the copper mining giant, Calumet & Hecla. Museum in the company’s patterns shop on Red Jacker Road, the building is a key historic element in the Calumet industrial landscape.
Location: 315 Calumet Avenue, Calumet, Michigan
Open: May 27 to October 11, Monday to Saturday – 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Closed: June 24 to August 12, Mon. to Sat. – 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Fees: $7.00 for adults, $3.50 for children 6-12, $2.50 for children 3-5.
www.michigan.gov/crhm

Copper Range Historical Museum
Exhibits focus on the Copper Range Mining Company, its workers, and community life. Nearby Pemrose mill is a well-preserved company town.
Location: Michigan State Highway 26, South Range, Michigan
Open: June to October – Tuesday to Saturday – Noon to 4:00 p.m.
www.pasty.com/heritage

Coppertown Mining Museum
Exhibits provide insights into operations at the copper mining giant, Calumet & Hecla. Museum in the company’s patterns shop on Red Jacker Road, the building is a key historic element in the Calumet industrial landscape.
Location: 315 Calumet Avenue, Calumet, Michigan
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www.michigan.gov/crhm

Copperport Mining Museum
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Fees: $7.00 for adults, $3.50 for children 6-12, $2.50 for children 3-5.
www.michigan.gov/crhm

Delaware Mine
This restored-ruined mine site provides self-guided tours of one of the oldest underground copper mines on the Keweenaw Peninsula. Location: Off U.S. Highway 41, 10 miles south of Copper Harbor
Open: July & August, Daily – 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; June, June-Septem 30, Monday through Saturday – 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Fees: $8.00, Age 13 & up, $4.00 senior/travelers 65+ and under, free for kids 5-12. www.roughming.org/delmar.html

Fort Wilkins State Park
Built in 1884, the park’s interpretive center provides insight into the history of the Copper Country. Location: Michigan State Highway 26, Rockland, Michigan
Open: Daily – 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Fees: $5.50 adults, $4.50 seniors, free for kids 12 and under. www.michigan.gov/mclain

Hankos Homestead
Settled by immigrant copper miners, Hankos Homestead is an example of a Finnish farm. Home of the former copper miner Hanka Homestead, volunteers provide guided tours.
Location: 53150 Michigan State Highway 26, Lake Linden, Michigan
Open: Memorial Day through Labor Day, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Holidays – Noon to 6:00 p.m.
Fees: Adults $5, children $3.
www.michigan.gov/parks

Houghton County Historical Museum
The museum features artifacts and photographs spanning over 100 years of mining life. Take a ride inside Calumet & Arizona Mining Company’s C&H Porter 0-4-0 Steam Engine. Location: 5700 Michigan State Highway 24, Lake Linden, Michigan
Open: May 27 to September 30, Monday through Saturday – 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Sunday – Noon to 4:00 p.m.
Fees: $4.00, Seniors $3.00, kids 12 and under free. www.houghtonhistory.org

Keweenaw County Historical Society
For a unique understanding of the Keweenaw County’s past, explore this collection of sites located throughout Michigan’s Copper Country. Location: 522 Portage Road, Houghton, Michigan
Open: Memorial Day to Labor Day, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Holidays – Noon to 6:00 p.m.
Fees: $5.00 for adults, $3.00 for 17 and under and students. www.keweenawhistory.org

Keweenaw Heritage Center at St. Anne’s
The Heritage Center is really two sites in one – the historic St. Anne’s Catholic Church and the Keweenaw Heritage Center at St. Anne’s. The exhibits featuring information on many local churches and their role in the community is on display.
Location: 1100 Flat Rock Road, Calumet, Michigan
Open: July 1 to August 11, Monday through Friday – 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
www.keweenawheritagecenter.com

Laurium Manor Mansion Tours
Thomas Houghton Jr., a founder of the Calumet & Arizona Mining Company, built this 45-room, 11,000 square foot home in 1898 using the finest and rarest building materials available. Self-guided tours and guided tours available. Location: 390 Sixth Street, Calumet, Michigan
Open: Four tours, 7 days a week, self-guided tours, 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
www.lauriummanor.com

McLain State Park
This popular park provides access to Lake Superior and access to the Portage Canal, located at the south end of the park, was dug in the late 19th century along Lake Superior's eastern shoreline to provide ship-
ning passage through the Keweenaw Peninsula. Modern campsites and interpretive programs.
Location: 1570 Michigan State Highway 231, Hancock, Michigan
Open: Year Round
Fees: Michigan State Park motor vehicle permit required
www.michigan.gov/parks

Michigan State Park
www.michigan.gov/parks

Michigan Technological University, Fifth Floor of Electrical Engineering, Houghton, Michigan
Open: Year Round
Call: (906) 487-2572
www.museum.mtu.edu

National Lakeshore
The Portage Canal, located at the south end of the park, was dug in the late 19th century along Lake Superior's eastern shoreline to provide ship-
ning passage through the Keweenaw Peninsula. Modern campsites and interpretive programs.
Location: 1570 Michigan State Highway 231, Hancock, Michigan
Open: Year Round
Fees: Michigan State Park motor vehicle permit required
www.michigan.gov/parks

Old Victoria
This early copper mining town provided lodging for miners and preserved several buildings. Guided tours interpret the signs and symbols of miners and their families in the 1890s.
Location: 43545 Victoria Drive Road, Rockland, Michigan
Open: May 27 to October 8, Daily – 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Fees: Adults $5, children 5-12, under 5 free. Reduced rates for museum only admission.
www.michigan.gov/parks

Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park
Michigan’s largest state park contains numerous historic copper mining sites. The 59,500-acre park offers day hiking, backpacking, camping, canoeing, fishing, hunting, hiking, winter sports and interpretive programs.
Location: 6 miles west of Ontonagon, Michigan
Open: Year Round
Fees: Michigan State Park motor vehicle permit required
www.michigan.gov/parks

Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park
www.michigan.gov/parks

Portage Canal State Park
Explore a stretch of Lake Superior shoreline. This popular park provides access to a stretch of Lake Superior shoreline. Location: 59,500 acres, Keweenaw County, Michigan
Open: Year Round
Fees: Michigan State Park motor vehicle permit required
www.michigan.gov/parks

Quincy Mine & Hoist
Explore the Quincy Mining Company on a 2 hour tour that includes a walk through buildings, rides on a cog-wheeled train and a trip into the underground mine. Shorter walking-only tours are also available.
Location: 5700 Michigan State Highway 24, Hancock, Michigan
Open: April 27 to June 2, Sat. – 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Sun. – 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; June 3 to June 23 & August 14 to October 20, Mon. to Sat. – 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Sun. – 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Last tour begins at 4:30 p.m.
Fees: Full tour – $12.50 adults, $11.50 seniors & AAA, $7.50 6-12 year olds, $5.00 kids 5-12, under 5 free.
www.pasty.com/heritage

Quincy Mine and Hoist
www.pasty.com/heritage

U.P. Fire Fighters Memorial Museum
The museum, located in the former copper mining town of Calumet, Michigan, celebrates the accomplishments of the Michigan’s Upper Peninsula’s firefighters. Location: 337-4579
Open: Year Round
Fees: Free for ages 12 and under, $5.00 adults, $4.50 seniors, $3.00 kids 6-12.
www.quincymine.com

The Keweenaw Ingot
4

The Keweenaw Ingot
5
**The Importance of Age**

Recently I looked around my house and asked myself—what will happen to my personal papers when I am gone? I have saved a lifetime’s worth of journals, letters, and photographs that trace my childhood, relationships, and creative expression. While these bits and pieces of my history are precious to me, what value do they have to anyone else?

There is irony in asking such questions. As a museum curator at Keweenaw National Historical Park, every day my colleagues and I care for artifacts and archives, including collections of personal and family papers. We organize unmarked photographs, conduct research and make sense of documents that seem nothing but a jumble. Naturalization papers, letters, and rent receipts are tangible evidence of lifetimes of personal struggle and success. We work to safeguard and make these materials available so that researchers can unravel their secrets.

One such collection, the Anderson-Eklund Family Papers, came to us in a small box. It contained a wealth of documents: financial, work, insurance, citizenship records, baptismal and confirmation certificates, correspondence, photographs, and even stereographs. A handwritten builder’s contract dated 1886 caught my eye when I first looked through the collection. The letter outlines an agreement to build a house on Calédonia Street in Albion Location for $375. The balance was to be paid to the builder in monthly installments of $20 with an interest rate of 6%. Specifications for the home are described in detail, giving us a rare glimpse of what a late 19th century domestic interior would have looked like.

Someone saved this note—perhaps for a legal purpose, but maybe also for the accomplishment that it represented. Regardless, 120 years after it was written, it is valuable for the information it contains. Knowledge common to the 19th century has been transcended to today’s researcher.

So, why is it easier for me to grasp the value in the Anderson-Eklund Family Papers but not in my own? The value has to do with the passage of time and our interest in understanding the past. Time creates distance from what was once familiar. The floor plan of a home built in 1886 is interesting because it is unfamiliar, whereas we may consider our own homes in 2026 commonplace. As the Anderson-Eklund home has increased in value over a 120 year period, so too has the builder’s contract that documents their hopes and dreams.

The Anderson-Eklund family saved their keepsakes, but whether they intended to pass them on or accidentally left them behind is a mystery. They were discovered approximately 92 years later in an attic on Rockland Street, less than one mile from their home on Calédonia Street. They may be surprised to learn how important their building contract is to us today for providing us an opportunity to look into the past through the people who lived it. Family events often provide a sense of how some of the larger stories in history affected real people. Personal and family paper collections such as the Anderson-Eklund's and many others are being preserved in the museum collection at Keweenaw National Historical Park, so that anyone can come delve into history, consider their own paper trails and make connections to their own legacies.

By Abby Sue Fisher, Chief of Museum, Archives & Historical Services at Keweenaw National Historical Park

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**Escaping on the Iron Horse**

The signs of heavy industry - smokestacks belching out black clouds, bustling streets and the “thud” of heavy machinery - were obvious to the Copper Country’s urban residents of the late 1800s through early 1900s. Their communities and mining locations had little in the way of park or “green space” where residents could escape the trappings of industrial life.

In addition, many people’s lives were changing in peculiar ways. Immigrants from rural areas, used to fresh air and open spaces went underground to work and lived in dirty, crowded environments. It was not the rising and setting of the sun that measured the time now, but rather the tick-tock of the clock. Many longed to escape their urban surroundings, if only for a moment.

Ironically, a machine symbolic of industrial America came to the rescue: the train. Railways delivered Copper Country residents from rapidly growing towns and cities to parks throughout the Keweenaw Peninsula for recreation and relaxation. Several places in particular were attractions for residents.

The Copper Range Railroad’s locomotives pulled long lines of passenger cars to Freda Park on the shores of Lake Superior. From 1908 to 1918, visitors could camp, picnic, walk along the beach, drink beer and dance at the park’s pavilion. Further north, the Keweenaw Central Railroad offered trips to Crestview Pavilion. Crestview offered many of the same amenities as Freda Park and was a short walk to Lake Superior’s shore and Eagle River. The Houghton County Traction Company’s interurban railcars offered trips to Electric Park. Its pavilion housed dances, concerts and lectures. Located halfway between Hancock and Calumet, it is no surprise that Electric Park was the most visited Copper Country getaway. It attracted almost 62,000 adults and children in 1909 alone.

Unlike its counterparts, White City was reached by ship. People were transported to this amusement park at the eastern entry to Portage Lake where they were offered a mechanical getaway complete with Ferris wheel. These out-of-the-way places were pleasant escapes from the toil of urban life where people could dance, camp or gaze at the northern lights as they sashayed across the night sky.

Times have changed on the Keweenaw Peninsula. The copper mining routine no longer dictates the rhythm of life. Today, instead of fleeing the Copper Country’s industrial setting, people come to explore the remnants of the copper industry at Keweenaw National Historical Park and the Keweenaw Heritage Sites. Many visitors to Keweenaw Peninsula look to escape their own urban realities by connecting with those that lived, worked and played here in decades past. Enjoy the sights and sounds of this unique place knowing that you are following in the footsteps of others who sought recreation and renewal.

By Gary Kaunonen, Park Ranger at Keweenaw National Historical Park
Snow Walks: Adapting to Winter with Ingenuity

Each autumn, local residents make plans for dealing with the extraordinary amount of snow that falls on the Keweenaw Peninsula. Shoveling and scooping are options for clearing the 200-plus inches that accumulate in a typical winter, but these methods consume a good amount of effort and time. A tried-and-true solution has survived through the years and can still be found in some yards throughout the Keweenaw: an elevated walkway, known locally as a snow walk. However, despite its simplicity, this adaptation to the winter climate is becoming a relic of the past.

This adaptation is based on simple physics. If you remember from your high school physics class, the work required to move an object is the product of force and the distance over which it moves. Years ago, local residents considered this principle when searching for ways to reduce the amount of time they spent removing snow from sidewalks. Recognizing that it is easier to move snow from higher to lower elevations, residents use gravity to do most of the work. The key to their innovative solution was found in a common feature of older homes. The first floors are usually elevated, exposed foundations of mine waste rock or red sandstone lift houses two or three feet above the surrounding grade. Snow walks connect front porches or back entrances to the edge of the street or a detached garage. Instead of hoisting snow up and over to clear a path, snow walk owners simply glide a shovel over the surface of the walk and tip the snow over the edge, thereby letting the accumulated snow cascade to the ground. This is as near to effortless as snow removal gets.

Before the winter season, snow walks are assembled from a homemade kit that can be put together in a matter of hours with nothing more than a screwdriver and a wrench. Most are modestly constructed from sawhorses with wooden planks laid on top to form the deck. A hand rail is typically added along one side, with a flight of stairs anchoring the snow walk on the far end. In late spring, the components are easily taken apart and stored in the back of a garage or basement until the snow flies again.

Snow walks were once a common sight in residential neighborhoods throughout the Keweenaw Peninsula, yet today only a few homeowners continue to maintain them. Harry and Marcia Bennett of Calumet Avenue are among the faithful who stand by the tradition. Every year since they purchased their former Calumet & Hecla company house in 1961, the Bennetts have assembled a 35-foot long snow walk that bridges their front door with the busy avenue. Right after Halloween, the Bennetts get to work installing their ingeniously engineered version, made from metal pipe and standard fittings to ease the process of assembly. “The snow walk cuts my shoveling time in half,” claims Harry, but he also admits that by mid-to-late February when the snowfall surpasses 150 inches, there is enough snow on the ground that he is finally obliged to lift his shovel.

Just as technology brought us the change from quill to ink and pen to typewriter to computer, advances have also come to snow removal. Snow blowers and plows mounted to pickups are more recent methods of clearing walks and driveways, and their rise in popularity has been accompanied by dwindling numbers of snow walks. While modern equipment gets the job done, it does not match the reliability and simplicity of the clever snow walk – a near-perfect adaptation to easing the burden of winter’s work.

By John Rosemurgy, Historical Architect at Keweenaw National Historical Park

This 1906 photograph shows an unusual covered snow walk leading to the front entrance of the Calumet & Hecla Public Library. Keweenaw NHP, Archives, Jack Foster Collection.

Left: Harry Bennett poses on the snow walk he used to access his house on Calumet Avenue. Right: Another example of a wooden snow walk at a house in Calumet, Michigan.

Keweenaw’s Advisory Commission

The Keweenaw National Historical Park’s Advisory Commission is chartered to advise the park and assist it in meeting its mission of preserving and interpreting the national significance of the Copper Country’s heritage. It can raise funds for these programs, and to assist any of the park’s other purposes. The commission is also authorized to develop preservation programs in coordination with state and local governments.

Many of the commission’s duties are concerned with advising the park, not only on its internal operations through the implementation of its general management plan, but also on its relationships with non-park properties and entities. Keweenaw National Historical Park was established as a partnership park, in which the park will work with sites not owned by the National Park Service but that contribute to the preservation and interpretation of the Copper Country’s heritage.

The commission advises the park on the selection of these heritage sites and the provision of financial and technical assistance to them.

In addition, the commission can undertake historical, educational or cultural programs to encourage appreciation of the Copper Country’s heritage. It can raise funds for these programs, or to assist any of the park’s other purposes. The commission is also authorized to develop preservation programs in coordination with state and local governments.

Keweenaw National Historical Park is an unusual park, with most of the land within its boundaries privately owned. Its effectiveness as a park lies in its ability to reach beyond a park’s traditional role, and the Advisory Commission is here to assist in that. Just as the history of the copper mining story involves many people, so too does its preservation.

By Kim Hoagland, Chairperson Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission

“Stories that Touch Our Lives”-continued

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If asked which national parks commemorate events of national mourning, many would first say a place like the Gettysburg Battlefield or the Arizona Memorial. After reading about some of the tragedies that occurred in the Copper Country, and thinking of modern-day accidents, I look at this landscape in a new way. As I walk by buildings like the Occoquan Number 13 shaft house, I have to wonder how many men saw for their last time a glimpse of daylight or a star-filled sky before descending into the earth. I understand how for some people, these sites are hallowed ground just as our battlefields and memorials are to the country as a whole.

As you explore the landscapes and sites of Keweenaw National Historical Park, you will have opportunities to reflect on copper mining’s role in the history of people’s quest for our natural resources. Here, as elsewhere, people risked their lives to provide the raw materials needed to produce goods to fuel our modern lives, whether they mined, drilled, logged, gathered or manufactured those resources. The next time you use a cell phone, take a moment to consider the copper in its circuitry. Where did it come from? Who mined it and in what conditions? Then use these questions as an opportunity to think about the lives of the people who worked in the Keweenaw’s copper mines and the people who continue the pursuit for resources today. Tragic stories of mining accidents are but one way to illustrate both the changes that have occurred since 1895, and how other things have remained the same.

By Dan Johnson, Interpretive Specialist at Keweenaw National Historical Park

In 1896 and today, miners face risks every time they descend underground. Keweenaw NHP Archives.
Keweenaw Heritage Sites: What’s in a name?

However, the term “Cooperating Sites” created interpret elements of the copper mining story. To assist the park and cooperate in the effort to partnership premise. Non-federal partners were Historical Park was established to operate on a traditional national parks, Keweenaw National Historical Park to interpret the Cooper- ing Sites. While you may still see that name during 2006, change is coming. The name during 2006, change is coming. The term “heritage” refers to a broad century. Woven throughout these events are stories of human resourcefulness, creativity, and industry’s ultimate decline in the twentieth century. The history of copper mining on the Keweenaw Peninsula. The park and its partners are here to preserve the heritage of the Copper Country, from prehistoric to historic times. The history of copper mining on the Keweenaw Peninsula is extensive and rich. It begins over a billion years ago with geologic processes that created the copper deposits, continues through prehistoric mining into the development of deep-shaft hard rock mining, and follows the industry’s ultimate decline in the twentieth century. Woven throughout these events are stories of human resourcefulness, creativity, and adaptation in the face of changing circumstances. Individual sites explain different aspects of copper’s multi-faceted story. Together, the Keweenaw Heritage Sites provide visitors the opportunity to explore this rich heritage.

As visitors circulate throughout the Keweenaw Peninsula this year, there will be evidence of the name change. By next year, the transition from Cooperating Site to Keweenaw Heritage Site should be complete. It is hoped that instead of confusion, the new label will create opportunities for travelers and locals to discover the many places that work together to preserve the heritage of the Copper Country.

By Tom Baker, Management Assistant at Keweenaw National Historical Park

The places that assist Keweenaw National Historical Park to interpret the Copper Country’s mining history used to be called Cooperating Sites. While you may still see that name during 2006, change is coming. The Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission and the park, in collaboration with existing cooperating sites, agreed to rename these important park partners as Keweenaw Heritage Sites.

The original term refers to the fact that unlike traditional national parks, Keweenaw National Historical Park was established to operate on a partnership premise. Non-federal partners were to assist the park and cooperate in the effort to interpret elements of the copper mining story. However, the term “Cooperating Sites” created confusion in visitor expectations. A 2004 visitor survey undertaken by the University of Idaho on behalf of the National Park Service revealed several misconceptions about the term. Was there a level of participation expected of visitors upon arrival? Was some sort of “co-op” membership required to visit the sites? With whom were they cooperating, and in what way? Many visitors at first did not realize that there was an affiliation between the park and the cooperating sites. Stakeholders agreed: If a stronger connection could be made between the sites and the park, visitors’ understanding and appreciation of the copper mining story could be reinforced.

Many alternatives were explored, but the name that rose to the top was “Keweenaw Heritage Sites.” The term “heritage” refers to a broad range of human experiences, as well as the natural processes that created the landscape we see today. Stories, events, traditions, people, landscapes, structures, artifacts and documents all contribute to the heritage of the Keweenaw Peninsula. The park and its partners are here to preserve the heritage of the Copper Country, from prehistoric to historic times.

The history of copper mining on the Keweenaw Peninsula is extensive and rich. It begins over a billion years ago with geologic processes that created the copper deposits, continues through prehistoric mining into the development of deep-shaft hard rock mining, and follows the industry’s ultimate decline in the twentieth century. Woven throughout these events are stories of human resourcefulness, creativity, and adaptation in the face of changing circumstances. Individual sites explain different aspects of copper’s multi-faceted story. Together, the Keweenaw Heritage Sites provide visitors the opportunity to explore this rich heritage.

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