



# Painesdale Mine & Shaft, Inc.

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Newsletter—Spring, 2013

## Summer Events

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### FinnFest

Will you be in the Copper Country for FinnFest 2013? We will be holding an open house and free tours during FinnFest on Saturday June 22nd from 12:00 to 3:00 pm. Come tour the Captain's office, the shaft house, and the hoist house. The Copper Range Historical Society and the Painesdale Methodist Church are also planning on holding open houses that day. So you can take a Range Town Tour, stopping at the Painesdale Mine Shaft, the Painesdale Methodist Church and the Copper Range Historical Society. Remember, walking tour maps of Painesdale will be available at the shaft house.

### 1913 Strike Centennial

2013 marks the 100th anniversary of the 1913 Copper Miner's Strike. Events will be going on locally throughout the year. We are planning on holding an open house and event at the shaft house on August 31st, the Saturday before Labor Day.

### Exhibits at the Dee Stadium June 10 - Sept. 2

We will be having an exhibit this summer at the Dee Stadium. Many other local history exhibits will be at the Dee as well. Look for our booth at the Dee all summer.

## 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1913 Strike

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This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Copper Miners Strike of 1913, which resulted in two murders in Painesdale (the Dally-Jane murders and the Seeberville murders). Much has been discussed in recent times regarding the strike and the fact that, even though the outcome was largely in favor of the mining companies, it gained national attention and demonstrated the strength of unions. However, it is interesting to go back and read what was being written about the strike at the time.

There is a book, *Strike Investigation by the Committee of the Copper Country Commercial Club of Michigan 1913*, printed in 1913 and addressed specifically to Woodbridge N. Ferris, the governor of Michigan at the time.

The opening statement of the book states:

"The Copper Country Commercial Club is an organization of 500 business men and others of Houghton and Keweenaw counties, whose purposes, as stated in the constitution of the club are as follows:

To instill...a spirit of civic pride among the people of the Copper Country...To upbuild, develop and improve manufacturing, mercantile...and other economic conditions..."

The introduction reads:

"On July 23 the Western Federation of Miners called a general strike of all of its members employed in the mines of this district, and within a few hours, by forcible means and otherwise, every man employed in or about the mines, whether a member of the federation or not, was deprived of his work, thus throwing out employment an immense body of men.

From the day of its inception the strike has been attended with rioting and bloodshed. Every day riotous mobs roam through the streets of our communities and are held in check only by the force of the National Guard of the state. Attacks on workingmen are of daily occurrence; our jails are filled with persons awaiting trial for violent acts during the strike; our children daily have before their eyes the spectacle of men acting in



absolute disregard of law and order; all of which creates a deplorable and disgraceful condition which should not be tolerated in a civilized community.”

Although the Copper Country Commercial Club is quite biased in their investigation, they do print a letter written by the Western Federation of Miners in July of 1913 and apparently distributed to each mining company in the district. None of the companies responded. The letter reads as follows:

“Gentlemen: Your employees, organized into local unions of the Western Federation of Miners, have decided by referendum vote to ask that you meet their representatives in conference on some day during this month for the purpose of discussing the possibilities of shortening the working day, raising the wages and making some changes in the working conditions.

The men working in and around your mines are dissatisfied with wages, hours and other conditions of employment. Realizing that as individuals they would not have sufficient strength to correct those evils or to lessen the burden placed upon them, they have organized into the local unions of the W.F.M., and through the local unions they have formed one compact body of the whole Copper District with an understanding and hope that from now on they may be enabled to sell their labor power collectively with greater advantage for themselves as well as their employers.

While the men have decided that they must have greater remuneration for their services, and that the working day must be shortened, it is not their nor our desire that we should have a strike with all the sufferings that is bound to bring to the men, to the employers and to general public. On the other hand we earnestly hope that the questions that have arisen between us would be settled peacefully with fairness and justice to both sides. Should you have the same feelings, we believe that the friendly relations that have existed between you and your employees in the past will continue in the future.

However, should you follow the example given by some of the most stupid and unfair mine owners in the past, the men have instructed us by the same referendum vote, to call a strike in all the mines owned and controlled by your company. We deem it unnecessary to set forth the facts and reasons for the demand for higher wages and shorter hours and other things, as we intend to do that in the conference, should you be fair

enough to meet us.

We hope you realize that labor has just as much right to organize as capital, and that these two forces, Labor and Capital, while their interests are not identical, must get together and solve the problems that confront them.

We expect to have your answer not later than the 21st of this month. If you agree to meet us, our representatives will be ready for a conference on any day and at any place that you may choose; provided that you do not set the day any later than the 28th of this month.

Your failure to answer this letter will be taken as a proof that you are not willing to meet us and to have the matters settled peacefully.”

The book also outlines the demands of the workers:

- “1. A demand for the recognition of the Western Federation of Miners.
2. A demand for either the abolishment of the one-man drill or the working of two men on each drill.
3. A demand for a minimum wage of three dollars for trammers and three dollars and fifty cents for miners.
4. A demand for an eight-hour work day.”

Later in the book, the Committee reports its conclusion:

- “1. The mine managers will not recognize the Western Federation of Miners.
2. No minimum wage applicable to all mines in the district can be established with justice to all parties concerned.
3. The one-man drill has come to stay.

The committee has also concluded:

- “1. That the question of establishing some kind of an 8-hour working day ought to receive the serious consideration of both men and operators.
2. That some attempt ought to be made to provide an adequate method by which the employee can obtain and have perfectly free access to the management for the purpose of presenting grievances without fear of discrimination or discharge.

## Thank you!

Thank you to Paul Petosky for mentioning our organization in his “Postmarks from the Past” article focusing on Painesdale in *The Great Lakes Pilot*.



## Ralph Raffaelli

Ralph Raffaelli, a former member of our board passed away in March. Ralph had been not only a board member of our organization, but also very involved in the preservation of the local history in general. He had a vast collection of historical photographs and was awarded the Gov. John B. Swinson Award for the preservation of Michigan history. We will miss Ralph and appreciate all that he contributed to Painesdale Mine & Shaft, Inc.

## Third Printing

We are now in the third printing of the Cookbooks, and have gotten great reviews from those who have them. If you haven't gotten your copy yet, there are still some available. It contains recipes and stories from the range towns.

Cookbooks are available to order for a \$15 donation. Please include \$5 for shipping for the first book, \$2 for each additional book. They are also available at Tina's Katalina in South Range.

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\$10.00

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