



Painesdale Mine & Shaft, Inc.

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Newsletter—Summer, 2016

Memories of Working Underground: Interview with Allan Keto

By Barbara Manninen



Champion #4 shaft/rockhouse is the first thing that comes to mind whenever you think of Painesdale, MI. The original shaft/rockhouse built in 1901-1902, was

removed and replaced in 1908-1909, doubling the size and capacity of the shaft/rockhouse.* This renovated structure is the iconic monument that still stands, saved from the acetylene torches in 1996, by a committee of local citizens with strong emotional and nostalgic ties to the part it played in their lives, and of others, over the almost 70 years it was in operation. Copper Range Company closed the mine in September 1967, but the shaft house and hoist had to remain in operation as they provided the water supply for Adams Township and Hancock, MI. In 1996, Adams Twp. no longer needed access to the mine, as a new and more modern water treatment plant was established above ground, so the effort to preserve the shaft began, by acquiring the properties by the committee, originally known SOS...Save Our Shaft," then later changed to "Painesdale Mine & Shaft, Inc."

For those of us, who grew up in Painesdale, and have memories of the mine when it was still in operation, it seemed like the mine "was a given," it would always be there. We knew that it was the heartbeat of Painesdale. To us little kids, it was scary, yet awesome, with its tall shaft house, huge poor rock piles, powerful train engines pulling heavy cars full of ore to be processed, and the sounds of mining operations that could be heard all over town. Picking wild strawberries, we could hear the skip dumping rock into the crusher. Powerful sounds! Powerful equipment! Strong air blasts from underground, rattling the dishes in the kitchen, rivaled the sound of jets, that were now appearing in the skies overhead, occasionally "breaking the sound barrier,"

a term we learned as kids before we even knew what that meant. Two almost identical sounds, overlapping the changing of the times in the 1950's, early 60's. A new era of technology was being born, while the old copper mine was now entering its waning years.

Soon it will be 50 years since the mine shut down in 1967. There are yet a few miners around who worked underground and have memories to share.

Allan Keto, a Painesdale resident, graduate of Jeffers High School Class of 1956, worked underground in Champion #3 and #4 for 2 years, from 1965-67, when the mine closed. His grandfather and uncles worked in the mines before him. Over two recent interviews, Allan generously shared his memories, saying the best place he worked was #4. "It was a good crew. No animosity." Although he laughed and said he was fired on the 2nd day on the job by the boss Otto Schultz. Dennis Lorenz, the guy Allan was working with got into an argument with Otto, so Otto told Dennis he was fired....then Otto looked at Allan and said "you are fired, too." Allan said he kept on working, as did Dennis, as only 2nd day on the job, he couldn't remember how to get back to the shaft.

Some of Allan's memories:

- Downdraft in #4 was cold. Ice would form in the winter around the shaft hole and down, but the air warmed as it traveled the 1000 feet across the 18th level to #3 and up and out.
- He did stope mining in #4 and #3.
- The man car had 3 decks, holding 9 men. Three men across, standing with shoulders at an angle, facing north.
- In shaft #3, at times, 6-7 guys rode bail on the skip. Level 14 to 18 signal engine to change level. Hang on the rope. No safety net.
- Levels 14, down to 16 & 18 were the working levels.

Continued on page 2...



Memories of Working Underground Continued

- Raise miners earned the most, drift miners were 2nd, stope miners 3rd, and trammers & timber men were 4th. Allan, as a stope miner, earned \$16.05/day, raised to \$16.56 ½ a day.

Through the interviews, Allan introduced me to terms I had to look up later. As he mentioned them, I made note, as he was mentally taking me on a tour underground, pointing out things as we went along, i.e. the geology underground, reflecting the past 7-8 million years. He mentioned epidote copper (greenish) and trap rock (reddish). The 18th level used to be a river bed. The copper mined in Painesdale was the Baltic vein on a 72 degree dip. How volcanoes and earthquakes shaped the copper lodes/masses north and south of the Portage Canal.

Allan also worked for C&H in Centennial #3 and #6 mines for a year, the sewer tubes in Milwaukee, mines in Utah and Arizona (gold) for a year, and White Pine for 29 years, (until they closed, Thanksgiving 1996). He also served in the Army 1960-62, the National Guard 4 years, and Naval Reserves as a Seabee for 16 years. In retirement, he has become a frequent world traveler, traveling to many faraway

places, with pages for stamping needing to be added to his passport. His next trip is back to India this fall.

As another note of interest. He recalled working with some MTU students on weekends in the mine, most of them from Canada. I wonder if they were mining engineering or geology majors, getting some OJT.

As always, when doing an article, or interview, for the newsletter, you have to hit the books & websites, to bone up on the history, mining terms, and geology of this area, as well as the efforts that have been made over the past 20 years to save the shaft/rockhouse. A book I used for reference was, "A Range of Opportunity: A Historic Study of the Copper Range company," by Richard A. Fields, copyright 1997, published by the Quincy Mine Hoist Association. Also, I perused through an old booklet issued August 1st, 1932, by the Copper Range Company, "Instructions and Rules for the Prevention of Accidents" to get a feel for mining at that time. And finally, read through websites by Kevin Musser.

*<http://www.copperrange.org/sosmem.htm>

South Range 4th of July Committee

by Mike Renier, Treasurer

The South Range Fourth of July parade, fireworks and events has been a tradition in our village since 1906. In the past few years we have added family events. The cost for the fireworks, parade prizes, kids games, races and events is \$13,000 dollars. We are reaching out to each of you for help. We would appreciate your help by sending a donation for whatever you can and receive a tax exemption on your annual tax return. Thanking you in advance.

Donations can be mailed to:
South Range Fourth of July Committee
PO Box 217 South Range, MI 49963

Cookbooks



Our cookbooks are still available and can be ordered by sending a check for \$15 plus shipping to Painesdale Mine & Shaft. You can also get them by contacting one of our board members, or stopping by Tina's Katalina restaurant or the Copper Range Historical Museum in South Range.

The cookbooks feature many recipes, including ethnic recipes from the many cultures that came to work in the mines. It also features stories of life in Painesdale and the range towns when the mines were open.

Become A Member/Donations

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

\$10.00
Yearly Membership

\$100.00
Lifetime Membership

\$ _____
Other Donation

Please make checks payable to:
Painesdale Mine & Shaft, Inc.
PO Box 332 Painesdale, MI 49955



What You Are Telling Us By Anton Pintar

We often receive comments from our members on their family ties to Painesdale, Copper Range, the Champion Shaithouses and the Range Towns. We share these as memorials to the many everyday people who built, lived in, worked in, and died in the towns of Painesdale, Atlantic Mine, South Range, Baltic, Trimountain and Toivola. If you have comments to make, please send them to us and we will put them in future Newsletters. -- Anton J. Pintar, Treasurer

"This is an unrestricted donation. Use it wherever the need is greatest. You have a very unique historic property. Preserve its historic significance well. Wishing you a very prosperous 2016."

Mike Groeneveld, Alexandria, VA

"My grandfathers worked in the mine, Fred Cole and John Hall. My parents were Fred 'Ted' Cole and Benita (Hall) Cole. My parents had a great love for Painesdale and the mine shaft. I hope to visit next summer and take the tour. Thanks for all the work you do. I enjoy the newsletters you send out."

Gail (Cole) Armstrong, Lake Orion, MI

"[This contribution] is in memory of my mother, a Cornish miner's granddaughter, Barbara (James) Thornton."

Wendy Hunter, Sarasota, FL

We have no relatives who worked in the UP copper industry, but have tried to revisit Champion#4 every 3-5 years or so (since we 'discovered' it in the 1980's).

Being native Michiganders from Saginaw, we hope to see this area restored and visited by our grandchildren.

The stone/brick steam hoist building (I assume that's what it is) is also an impressive part of the mining complex, and I trust that your restoration plans include that beautiful building, as well. It's another example of the care and workmanship that went into building a mining community."

David and Kathryn Louks, Saginaw, MI

"Thank you for that newsletter. It was very informative. I was at Tech with Uldis Riekstins, a Lithuanian refugee who escaped to Poland in 1951. He showed up in Michigan in a refuge for the Lithuanians, Estonians, and Latvians. He said he didn't fully make it as he left a hand back there in the process. He never told us where he left that hand or how it came to be. Uldis had the third highest GPA of our class of Civils in 1961. He worked for Boeing checking

Free Tours

We offer free tours by appointment.

Call (906) 231-5542 to set up a time to tour the shaft house, hoist house, and Captain's office.

design stresses of the wing designs for his entire career. He marveled at my stories of road location, road design, building forest service roads, bridge design, canal location, water resource project planning, water management. He wanted to hear more. He envied the varied experiences that I had. He was a very patriotic loyal American. The Russians weren't friendly to the locals when they moved in to occupy the Baltics."

Onni Perala, JHS Class of '56, MTU BSCE class of '61

"Enclosed is my yearly gift. I was born and raised in Painesdale. My dad, Peter Steinen, worked for Copper Range both in Painesdale and White Pine. I get up there at least once a year and enjoy it very much. Many wonderful memories."

Kathleen Steinen Lewis, Rapid River, MI

"It sounds like you are on the committee working on saving the Champion No. 4 Shafthouse. Something that has been rolling around in my head since Dovey Paulson died, has anyone ever done a history of the water system? Before the new wells were drilled to the south of the old Copper Range Shops all the Adams Township and Hancock water was pumped up out of No. 4 Shaft. If it hasn't been collected yet, the oral history will soon be lost. Since Ed Stoneman, Dovey Paulson and my Dad [Fabian Godell] are all gone the only one that might be able to explain the system is Gene Johnson, unless he is gone too [now deceased]. I was down underground once or twice. Seen where the water poured down from the roof through drill holes and was collected in dams. This is where my memory gets fuzzy, I think they used wooden plugs to plug up some of the holes when the dams got too full and then pulled them out as they needed more water, or in the case of a major fire pulled more plugs as the water level dropped. But it would be good to get it recorded, if it isn't already. I think Gene was on second shift at that time and he took over when Ed retired. The dams were on third level and the pumps to keep the mine from flooding was on seventh. The pumps were Allis Chalmers. I remember the fear at that time was not to mess with anything, because the water was found by accident, so it could be lost just as easily.

Lloyd Godell (Disclaimer, Lloyd Godell is Barbara Manninen's Cousin)



What You Are Telling Us Continued

"I am sending you some pictures that were taken in 1957-61 in the Range-Painesdale area [see below]. I have fond memories of my days in Painesdale. I am sending PM&S a check to cover my dues. Rosalie and I would enjoy a tour when we are in the area for the Fourth.

I attended Painesdale School for the third grade only walking to school from Concord Street in the blustery winter.

I also remember helping you with your first car, a 1949 four door Ford."

Joe Sullivan, Lake Placid, FL



Champion #4 Shafthouse



Painesdale Texaco Gas Station



Painesdale Water Tank

Note: This item is being repeated because the photos were accidentally left out of the previous Newsletter.

Painesdale Mine & Shaft, Inc. Fact Sheet By Anton Pintar

Painesdale Mine and Shaft, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. According to our Constitution and Bylaws: "The purpose and objectives of the Painesdale Mine and Shaft, Inc. shall be to preserve the one remaining shafthouse (#4) while maintaining a safe environment, to receive as gifts or bequests, to purchase, to raise funds, to preserve and to make available to the people all procurable material and properties pertinent to the history of the area, and to raise monies to accomplish the goals."

The members of the Painesdale Mine and Shaft, Inc. Executive Board are all unpaid volunteers who live very busy lives, even the retirees.

The following figures are of interest:

Number of lifetime members	241
Number of regular members	280
Number on mailing list	886
Number on email list	353
Cookbooks sold	551
Net contributions (2005-16)	\$58,396.36
Net revenue from cookbook	\$5,453.04
Total spent on building restoration (2005-16)	\$14,251.51
Liability insurance (2005-16)	\$27,841.00

Building Restoration Projects:

October, 2008	Settlement measurement*
April, 2009	Settlement measurement*
October, 2009	Settlement measurement*
October, 2010	Settlement measurement*
Summer, 2012	Repair and replace lower windows on shafthouse
Summer, 2012	Replace front steps of Captain's office
Summer, 2012	Repair shafthouse floor
October, 2013	Five-year settlement measurement*
Summer, 2014	Repair and replace upper windows on shafthouse
Summer, 2015	Survey of PM&S property**

*Done by UP Engineers & Architects to verify that Champion #4 shafthouse has stopped settling.

**Done to determine the feasibility of putting in handicap parking and ramp behind the Captain's office.

Future Projects:

- Provide handicap access to Captain's office
- Further repair floor of shafthouse building
- October, 2017 next scheduled settlement measurement by UP Engineers & Architects
- Repair steps to 2nd floor in shafthouse
- Begin planning for "museum" in shafthouse
- Begin planning for restoration of hoist building.



PM&S Captain's Office Accessibility Project by Anton Pintar, Treasurer

Painesdale Mine & Shaft has been awarded a Keweenaw Heritage Grant to make the Captain's Office handicap accessible. All PM&S tours start and/or end at the Captain's Office. The Shafthouse and Hoist Building are handicap accessible; the Captain's Office is not.

The main entrance to the Captain's Office has stairs leading to a small porch with narrow doors and a right turn into the office. Replacing the stairs with a ramp is infeasible because the doors and right turn will not accommodate a wheelchair. There is a rear entrance that currently is not used. The Captain's Office Accessibility Project will put a handicap parking spot in the rear of the building with a short, level, paved walkway to the rear entrance. The rear door will have to be widened to accommodate a wheelchair. If necessary, the interior doors will also be modified. The basic

historic nature of the Captain's Office will be preserved. This approach was suggested by Kurt Leuthold of the Leuthold Family Foundation, one of our benefactors.

The estimated cost of the project is \$6,000. The Keweenaw Heritage Grant, sponsored by the Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission, will cover \$2,000. The balance will be covered by previous contributions from our members, including generous contributions from the Leuthold Family Foundation. The project will be completed during the Summer/Fall of this year.

The PM&S Executive Board thanks our members, Kurt Leuthold, and the KNHP Advisory Commission for helping to make this project a reality.

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(by Sherry, Chris & Glenn)
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