

# Rainesdale Mine & Shaft, Inc.

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Newsletter—Fall, 2021

## This Year's Preservation Work By Michael Prast, Secretary

It has been a very busy season yet again for preservation of the Champion #4 mine site. Due to some generous patrons and a couple grants we were able to complete some large scale projects.

The year started out with a lot of scanning of some old Copper Range documents that are in our possession and at the Copper Range Historical Museum. This process is talked about in another article but was our main winter project taking hundreds of man hours. We also worked to increase our online visibility. We purchased an ad in the Keweenaw Convention and Visitor Bureau adventure guide as a historic point of interest. This organization is a go-to location and website for tourists to gain information about the Copper Country. Our online presence was also increased by setting up a Google Business, Yelp, and Tripadvisor account. These allow people to search our organization, learn about hours or special events, obtain easy driving directions, and find our website. We encourage you to look up these listings and leave a review or comment to help increase our visibility. We also set up an Amazon Smile account to receive automatic donations when people buy products with us selected through their Smile portal.



Once the weather warmed up, it was time to put away the computer and begin our site improvement projects. The summer projects started with getting new signage around the site. A local life member welded some metal poles to old tire rims to act as sign posts. These have their bases covered in rock to stand up. These signs, depending on their location, say "visitor parking", "no motorized vehicles", "respect the past...", etc.

The first construction project of the year was the addition of steel stairs that lead from the parking area down to the lower level of the site. Previously, there was just a rock ramp on the north side of the shaft house that has been washing away and was in rough shape. The goal was to create steps that are easy on the knees but also fit into the industrial landscape. The hillside was also covered in rock to keep the weeds down and protect the slope from erosion.

In the Captain's office, we had the back rooms cleaned out. First the safe from the old pay office was moved down to the hoist house due to it being too heavy for the floor and causing damage. With the safe





## Preservation Work Continued

out of the way, the old furnace, toilet, and shower were removed to open up the space for more historic document displays. We also had the back door upgraded to a modern metal door for security and to make it ADA accessible. The building now has a ramp leading up to a door that meets current ADA standards.

The largest project of the season was the asbestos removal in the beginning of July. Most of it was in previously inaccessible locations but as we look to expand our tour experience, we needed to take care of it for safety. There was some friable materials used as pipe coverings but a good portion was around the site as building materials that contained asbestos like shingles and tiles. The process took 2 ½ days to complete, cost \$14,000, and totaled 1,420 lbs of removed material. With these hazards gone, we are able to move forward with other projects while keeping our volunteers and hired workers safe.

The smaller projects around the site are just as important as the big ones. In August, a local Youth Works Industries group had a group of teens come out to the site for the day to help us out with a few projects. They moved a couple of lockers, cleaned



Asbestos removal: "Glove bags" rap around a historic pipe to seal in asbestos while workers put their hands inside the built-in gloves to remove fibers safely.



Asbestos testing

up tire scraps around the new stairs and sand drop, smoothed out the gravel driveway from washout, and completed some general landscaping along the path from the stairs to the hoist house. We certainly appreciate their hard work! The old water utility chlorination building was also removed from the site. It was becoming quite dilapidated and due to a leaky roof for decades, was a mold factory. It is from this building we tried to save some documents but sadly many were not even recognizable as paper anymore. See one of our previous newsletters or Facebook for details on that project. Given the condition of the building, we decided to remove it with the intent of using the remaining slab for a bench and informational displays to teach about the site history. Asbestos shingles were removed from the hoist house lean-to and new metal sheathing was installed once the hazards were removed. Aside from construction projects, there is an effort to document artifacts around the site. Our buildings have a lot of artifacts and we find more every time we work on a section of a building. Because so many are found in random spots, we have started to log and tag these artifacts so they can be moved and displayed, without the clue of its resting location lost. We have also received a couple artifact donations from patrons which we are excited to include in our collection to help tell the story of the Champion Mine and Copper Range as a whole.

We appreciate everyone who donated or physically aided to make all these projects happen!



## And the Winners Are...

The 1930s were tough in the Copper Country. Copper prices were down and so was the national economy. In an effort to encourage employees to become more self-sufficient the company encouraged miners to plant gardens. The company plowed up available farm land and miners were given seeds and seed potatoes and they were told to have at it.

To encourage participation, the company offered cash prizes for the Best Garden, the Best Yard, and the Best Potato Patch.

Here is a list of some of the winners whose names were gleaned from one of our digitally archived ledger books.



Photo courtesy of Judy Crotty

### Yard Prize August 1932

- Henry Kallio \$7.50
- Antony Poisson \$7.50
- Harry Raymont \$3.00
- Jacob Kratt \$2.00
- Paul Car \$7.50
- Williams Andrews \$10.00
- Edward Cowling \$5.00
- Edward Durocher \$3.00
- John Priniski \$2.00
- Jasiah Reed \$10.00
- Peter Taucar \$5.00
- George Wakeham \$3.00
- James Mitchell \$1.00
- Emerigo Romanini \$1.00

### Potato Patch Prize September 1932

- Charles Palmer \$7.50
- Otto Harju \$7.50
- Authur La Chappelle \$3.00
- Slavko Zager \$2.00

### Garden Prize August 1932

- Peter Butala \$10.00
- Arthur La Chappelle \$5.00
- Edwin Eddy \$5.00
- Peter Michaels \$3.00
- Joe Ozzello \$3.00

### Yard Prize September 1934

- Paul Car \$5.00
- Henry Kallio \$3.00
- Harry Raymonts \$2.00
- Edwin Eddy \$1.00
- Steve Chapman \$5.00
- Gus Grohman \$5.00
- John Hanley \$5.00
- Nester Koski \$3.00
- James Teague \$3.00
- Gino Bertotti \$3.00
- Ivan Brayton \$2.00
- John Heikkinen \$2.00
- J. Messner \$2.00
- John Perlich \$1.00
- George Lydia \$1.00
- Joseph Murray \$1.00

### Potato Patch Prize September 1934

- Victor Giacoletto \$5.00
- Luigi Cortese \$5.00
- Carl Berger \$5.00
- Matt Kostamo \$5.00
- Waino Polso \$3.00
- Enrico Giuli \$3.00
- Mrs. K. Mihelcich \$3.00
- Matt Masalin \$3.00
- Waino Vundlery \$2.00
- Frank Nisson \$2.00

### Garden Prize September 1934

- Sam Adami - \$5.00
- Frank Venturi \$3.00
- Giov. Bertolli \$2.00
- Edwin Eddy \$1.00
- Peter Michela \$5.00
- Gust Grohman 5.00
- Amos Neri - \$5.00
- Peter Tavcar - \$5.00
- Walter Charles - \$3.00
- Steve Austin - \$3.00
- John Link - \$3.00
- Joseph Plesha - \$2.00
- Ralph Raffaelli - \$2.00
- James Balagna - \$2.00
- Ernest Stevens - \$1.00
- John Puniski - \$1.00
- Joe Ozzello - \$1.00

### Garden Prize September 1935

- Amos Neri \$6.00
- Guiseppi Venturi \$3.00
- Sam Adami \$3.00
- Peter Michels \$4.00
- Steve Austin \$6.00
- Edwin. Eddy \$1.00
- Gus Grohman \$1.00
- James Bologna \$7.00
- Joesph Plesha \$5.00
- Emil Vittori \$5.00





## Archiving Update

Last winter, volunteers were able to digitize and make available to the public the collection of historic documents in the possession of the PM&S and Copper Range Historical Society. These documents are now available by going to the PM&S website and clicking the Resources tab.

As work progressed, it came to our attention that there was also a substantial cache of Copper Range Company documents in the possession of Adams Township.

At the October, 2021 Adams Township Board meeting a request was made to the Board to allow a volunteer working under the auspices of both the PM&S and CRHS to access and scan this cache of historic documents. The Township Board agreed to the request and access was granted. With the coming of the scanning season (AKA winter in the UP) these documents will be inventoried, scanned and made available to the public at no cost. Stay tuned for further developments.

## Tours

The 2021 tour season was the most successful ever for the Champion. For the first time we had regular tour hours on Saturdays from noon to 4:00. These tours proved to be incredibly popular with over 300 visitors taking the time to check us out. On one very busy day in August we had over 50 visitors.

We are always looking for volunteers to help out. We particularly need individuals who are willing to help us during our tour hours. Having someone as a Greeter would help us a lot. Deep knowledge of the Champion is not required. Only a willingness to meet and greet is required.

## Paycheck Gifts

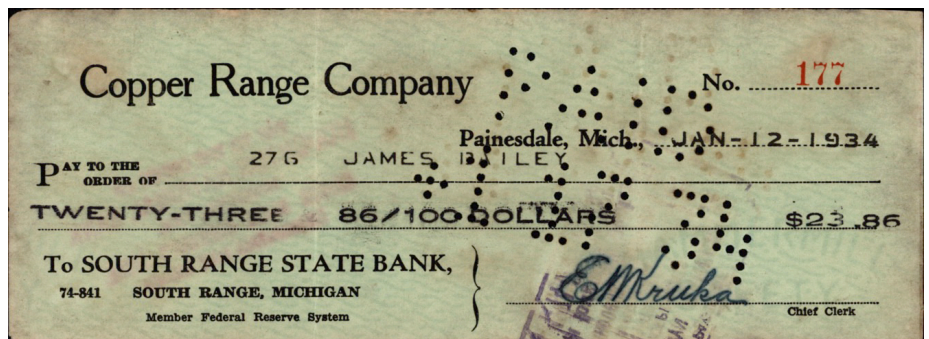


Are you looking for a unique gift for a descendant of a Copper Range Company employee? We may have an answer for you.

Last year, volunteers at the Painesdale Mine & Shaft digitally scanned its collection of 7,200

employee paychecks. About 75% of the checks were issued in either 1930 or 1940. The rest were distributed over the years 1919, 1920, 1921, 1934, 1936, 1937, 1941, and 1944. The check images have been curated to allow easy on-line browsing by individuals interested in looking for names that they recognize. A digital index to this collection has been created and made available to the public at no charge. With this index, it is possible to search for checks by first letter of the last name and then year of employment. Now that the information found in these checks has been preserved for historical purposes, the

Board of Directors would like to offer our supporters the opportunity to acquire the original paper checks. PM&S is asking for a donation of \$10.00 per check. There is no cost to view and download the digital images. More complete instructions on acquiring the original paper checks can be found in the index. The index can be found by going to our web site at [www.painesdalemineshaft.com](http://www.painesdalemineshaft.com) and clicking the "Resources" tab at the top of the page.



## Future Projects By Michael Prast, Secretary

We had a busy last season and the next looks to be the same. We are extra excited about these upcoming projects.

With the back room of the Captain's office cleaned out, there is some work that needs to be done to make it presentable. We are looking to have the flooring fixed up and painted, wall damage repaired, cover up some holes from the old utilities, and some overall maintenance. The goal is to extend our displays into the back room so we can have more of our fantastic documents and pictures out for people to see.

For the shaft house, there are big plans! Because the building is covered in old metal sheathing, a lot of which had different use prior, there are many pin holes that just allow water to run through. We want these patched up to try to seal up the building more to prevent further deterioration of the structure. This is estimated to cost around \$15,000 due to the height and shape of the building. We are also moving towards opening the upper levels of the building for tours! For this to happen, we need to do some structural repairs on the walkways to make them safe for the public. However, once we get those areas repaired, we will be able to offer tours to the rock crusher floor to see all the machinery still in place, waiting for their next load of ore. We are not sure when this will be done as it depends on contractor



Rock crusher level

schedule and donations, but hopefully before the end of the next season. While we have a good fund going to begin work, the cost is also still variable as you never know what surprises there might be in an old building and we are still fundraising for this project. Projections to get the whole project done could be between \$30,000-\$50,000.

The hoist house is also seeing some work. While this building is in very good condition thanks to its stone design, many of the windows have been damaged or are missing completely. We are looking to start tackling the windows starting with a couple being repaired over the winter to seal up the building and let in more light.

Continue to check out our Facebook page for updates on the projects as well as pictures. Since everyone involved with the mine is a volunteer, all donations go directly back to the buildings. If a particular project really speaks to you and you would like to help fund, please let us know. We always accept physical donations but we also have an online donation option on our website. Everything we do is to preserve this site for current and future generations to enjoy and appreciate. Thank you for your continued support.

## Family Reunions

Are you planning a family reunion in the Copper County area for next summer? Are you looking for a fun activity to keep everyone busy? If so, consider arranging a tour of the Champion as a group activity. If you are interested in arranging a tour please contact us at [painesdalemine@gmail.com](mailto:painesdalemine@gmail.com) or you can call 906-482-0776.



Rock crusher level





## Buzzer Signaling System at the Champion



To run a safe and efficient mine it is necessary to have a fail-safe system of communication between the underground workers and the hoist operator. Such communication allows underground workers to

communicate the need and readiness for a skip to be lifted to the surface.

At the Champion Mine this was done using a system of in-house designed buzzers. When a skip was ready to be lifted, an underground worker would push a lever that would buzz a buzzer on every level in the mine shaft. This would warn all underground workers that the skip was about to be moved. Additional buzzers sounded by the Landers Office in the shaft house and by the Hoist Engineer in the hoist house. The Lander would then push a buzzer lever that would sound the underground and hoist house buzzers to alert the workers and hoist engineer that underground signal had been received and that it was safe to continue. After hearing the second buzz the hoist engineer would prepare to move the skip by sounding the buzzer a third time. The skip would then be moved.

This repetition of the signals was a safety precaution. At each point the workers had an opportunity to stop the process if they detected a discrepancy in the signals.



Signal switch by the Lander's office of the shafthouse

More complete information about this signaling system can be seen in our digital archives. The following QR code at the beginning of this article will direct your browser to a 1920 article that appeared in Volume 76 of the professional journal Electrical World.

## Moose and Cookbooks!



Are you looking for a unique gift? Consider adopting one of our Morris the Miner Moose. He is 9 inches tall and is wearing one of our navy hoodies printed with our logo. He is ready for work in the mine with his hardhat with headlamp. Morris can be had for a \$20 donation.

We also have a cookbook that is published by the Painesdale Mine and Shaft. It is loaded with local recipe favorites along with interesting local history and tidbits of trivia. A copy of this great cookbook is available for a \$20 donation.

We will do our best to reduce the shipping cost but we will charge you no more than \$8.00 for any order.



## Thank You Donors

The PM&S Board of Directors would like to send out a heartfelt thank you to those supporters who have contributed financially to our preservation efforts. The funds received as a result of this summers tours, membership, memorials, and a variety of other sources helps us keep the lights on and the insurance paid.

### New/Renewed Yearly Membership

- Deborah Frontiera
- Bonnie Wolff
- James Nelson
- Jane Dykowski
- Otto Dickow
- William C and Carolyn Haines
- Jack Rades
- Donna Laux
- Charles & JoEllen (Putrich) Albertson
- Andrea Mickalich Maggard
- Anita Pakkala
- Ken Niemi
- Marlaine Deforge
- Deborah Frontiera
- Donna Laux
- Scott Paavo
- Otto Dickow
- John Beckiusp
- Tara Rabideau
- Andrea Mickalick - Maggard
- Steve Rosswurm
- Teressa Savastano
- New/Renewed Life Member
- Katherine Johnson
- Melissa Chichester
- Ruth Katalin
- Denise Morgan
- Bruce Feuerstein
- Harold Wilson
- Jim and Barbara Morin
- Chris Paine
- Todd and Maggie Perry
- Dianne Perry Smith and Jason Smith
- Al and Melissa Perry
- Jim Andreini
- Donald Valentino
- Jeremy Jordan
- Wayne Stordahl
- Frank Rugani
- Bonnie Wolff
- Stanley Laurila
- Joyce Laru Swan
- Eric Murray
- Scott Chapman
- David & Kathryn Louks
- Joe Morgan

### IMO Donations

#### Nov 2020

- Mary Taddeucci - IMO Steve Albee
- Mary Taddeucci- IMO Elsie Iskra & Margret Lombard

The Board would also like to thank a growing group of donors who fall into a new Patron category. Over the past year these Patrons have donated over \$56,000. It is these funds that have been and will be used to move forward in our efforts to preserve and open the Champion #4.

One last thank you goes out to the anonymous individual who has sent us Econo receipts on a regular basis.

- S.M. Dickinson - In Honor of Scott See
- John & Karla Lawton - IMO Anton Pintar

#### December 2020

- Paul & Karen Hackman Kangas - IMO Elsie & Margaret Lombardi)
- Joseph Pintar - IMO Anton Pintar
- Gregorich Family - IMO Rudy & Ann Gregorich
- Christine Tews- IMO Neal Puncochar
- Richard McCrate - IMO Erik Sporbart
- Nancy and William Gaggioli - IMO Harry Williams
- Bruce Groeneveld - IMO Doris Groeneveld - Hanzi

#### Jan 2021

- Janet Kokko - IMO Margaret Lombardi
- Janet Kokko
- Mike Groeneveld - IMO Doris Hanzi
- Janice Putrich - IMO Paul Putrich
- Erin & Glenn Cole - IMO Dean Cole
- Janet Kokko - IMO Steve Albee

#### May 2021

- Gail Armstrong - IMO David F. Cole

#### June 2021

- Geraldine Hutchinson - IMO Wendel Angove

#### July 2021

- Mary Taddeucci - IMO Angeline Taddeucci Golec
- Sue, Danelle & Rick Feira - IMO Dominic C. Feira

#### August 2021

- Sharon Bryant - IMO Job M. Bryant

#### October 2021

- Olivia Kokko Allen - IMO Erick Karna

- George Hackbardt - IMO Janet Hackbardt and Matt Korpi

#### November 2021

- Janet Kokko IMO Angie Taddeucci Golec

### General Donors

- Nanette Schulte
- Anonymous Donation
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- Gail Armstrong
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Become a member and support our efforts to preserve the Champion #4 Shaft Rock House.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Yearly Member \$10

\_\_\_\_\_ Patron \$1000

\_\_\_\_\_ Life Member \$100

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Donations can be sent to:  
Painesdale Mine & Shaft  
PO Box 332  
Painesdale, MI 49955

You can also donate digitally. This QR Code will direct your mobile device to our website's donation page.

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Check out our Facebook page.  
Or you can find our web site @  
[www.painesdalemineshaft.com](http://www.painesdalemineshaft.com)

