



Rainesdale Mine & Shaft, Inc.

Michael Prast
Vince Kanthak
Vince Kanthak
Barbara Manninen

President
Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary

Trustees—
Janet Gregorich
Catherine Lewis
Kurt Stevens

(906) 369-5358
www.painesdalemin shaft.com
painesdalemine@gmail.com
PO Box 332 Painesdale, MI 49955

Newsletter - Spring, 2023

The Busiest of Winters By Michael Prast, President

I am going to go out on a limb and say that this past winter has been one of the busiest the Champion #4 site has seen since the mine closed. We had major undertakings in all three of our buildings designed to enhance the experience and preserve the structures. A lot of the work completed was on the interior so it made sense for the contractors to wait until winter. It was cold, but protected. This also worked out nicely for us so the work did not interfere with tours.

Captain's Office: The first project was to upgrade the electrical of the entire building. No one knew when the last time it was inspected and as we expanded our displays, we were finding the need for more outlets than the building originally had. The electricians replaced all of the electrical wiring, outlets, and light switches in the building. They also replaced all of the overhead light fixtures. The old fluorescent lights did not fit historically and provided poor lighting. The new lights provide brighter light and match the industrial style of the site. Don't forget to look up at them when you visit!

Next, the entire interior was painted. At one point in its past, the building was painted with generic white. This white had faded and dirtied over time. Historically, the building would have been painted "Copper Range Green." There were even traces of this color in the corners of the building and under the lockers. We took samples of this paint and matched it to Sherwin Williams "julep mint." The whole interior of the office is now this green with a white ceiling. The Captain's Office is now returned to a cleaner historic state and better situated to be set up information and photographic displays.

Hoist House: This building is also a lot brighter now on the inside. As previous visitors might have noticed, a lot of the windows were broken or covered up with makeshift barriers to keep the weather out. Some lucky visitors might have seen the occasional bird make its way in. All of these



Window sash being refurbished.

windows have now been repaired! Every window in the structure has been repaired with glass except the north side of the building. Those windows are well boarded up and right behind much of the electrical equipment. For the first time in a long time, the top of the shafthouse can be seen from the operator's booth through the upper windows.

Shaft-Rockhouse: This building has seen the most extensive work over the winter. Contractors worked for two months on stabilizing the walkways to the upper levels of the structure. A local engineering firm provided a repair list to meet building code requirements for tour access. Starting on the ground level, one of the original columns was completely corroded at the base and needed to be splinted back to the original foundation. A new support column running to a new concrete footing was added to support a long steel beam span at levels 2 and 3.

Continued on page 2



The Busiest of Winters Continued



Before and after of south rock crusher floor.

Level 2 saw decking stabilization and wood barriers installed to keep visitors away from the bare edges of the platform. The stairs leading from level 2-3 were completely corroded away and needed to be replaced. They were rebuilt using original blueprints from 1902. If the steel were rustier, the mine workers would not even notice the difference! One hand rail was able to be salvaged and attached to the new staircase. So for those of you who are able to take a tour, you will still be able to touch the hand smoothed steel from decades of Champion workers.

Before you get teary, there is more! Level 3 saw some decking replacement as well as lots of wood railings to protect visitors from the edge of the platform. There are also a couple unique viewing areas now accessible! A couple into the main rock bin and one to see the steam hoist that drove the rock crushers. Level 4 is the rock crusher floor and required the most replacement of structure. Due to the roof above this part of the rockhouse being open for decades before Painesdale Mine & Shaft obtained the building, the wood decking and steel joists were

completely rotten away. Essentially no strength left in them. All of the decking was torn up and new steel beams put into place between the original ones (the old joists were left in place). New rough sawn decking was installed over the joists across the whole floor. It is beautiful! There is now a large safe place to walk up to the rock crushers and admire all the machinery that has been left in place, just waiting to be turned back on. There are also wonderful views out of the windows at this level.

Getting visitors to this spot has been the dream of the organization for a long time and has been years in the making. We now have safe access to take guided tours up to see this unique perspective of how the rock was processed once it was brought out of the shaft and how the shaft-rockhouse operated from up close. However, the project is not complete. We have stabilized the south side of the rock crusher floor but we would like to expand access around the east side of the crushers and to the north end of the floor. On this side there is a drop hammer that dealt with large masses of copper that did not fit it the crushers. We also want to clean out the room with the steam engine in it. All of this will require further donations to fund the endeavor. Over \$30k has been spent this winter alone to get to this point and we are still fundraising for the rest.

Archiving: The ongoing process of archiving the documents that we have in our possession has continued through the winter. Much of this winter has been focused on various ledgers that we have. A volunteer has been scanning them and another volunteer transcribing some of them. There is more on this in a later article.

With all of this work having been completed, we have depleted a lot of our preservation funds. Any donations help and we still manage to move mountains with the limited resources we have. Check our Facebook and website for further updates on these projects as well as tour offerings. Hope to see you at the mine!

We would like to thank all our partners that helped move these projects along: Keweenaw Power and Light, Dale Johns Contracting, Robert E. Johnson Contracting, Fire Tower Engineered Timber, Keweenaw National Historic Park, Keweenaw Area Community Foundation, and all of our generous donors.



Lucius L. Hubbard Letter

Lucius Lee Hubbard was the first general manager of the Copper Range Company. He began this role in 1899. Prior to 1899 he was the State Geologist of Michigan. One of his responsibilities as the State Geologist was to survey area copper mines. This resulted in his having to travel during times of the year when the existing roads were sketchy at best. This letter was written by Hubbard to his wife. The original letter and its transcription can be found in the Digital Archives of the Copper Range Historical Society. If you are interested in seeing the full letter in both the original handwritten form and the transcription by John Blom, scan the QR code.



Houghton, April 16, 1899

The weather turning cold, I determined to try to reach the Wyandotte the next day, so I arose at 4 o'clock and we left without much delay, breakfasted at the Trimountain, and reached the location in time for dinner. But alas! The weather suddenly became quite warm and for four days the road was absolutely impassable, almost even to footmen, so that my driver and I were imprisoned until yesterday, when we left the location at 2:30 a.m. and arrived safely in Houghton at noon. No one who has not gone through the same experience can realize how hard such a trip is. The horses, if they once get off the narrow-beaten track, or step through if this is soft, flounder about and some become perfectly helpless and at times exhausted. In crossing a creek our progress was blocked by the ice and snow packing in front of the sleigh and for a time I feared that we should not get out. Five pairs of horses started with us and reached here this morning as I was on my way to church. I had an excellent driver. He was always cheerful and very good company, so that the trip was not without novelty and interest.

Lot 28



This undated photo shows the water tank building along with Shaft House #2. In the distance shaft house #3 can be seen. Shaft house #4 is out of the frame to the left. Photo curtesy of Bruce Groeneveld.

On March 6, Michael and Vince attended the regular monthly meeting of the Adams Township Board of Supervisors. At the meeting they requested permission from the Board to allow PM&S to clear the volunteer vegetation from lot 28. Lot 28 is an abandoned lot adjacent to the Champion site.

Permission was granted to do the clearing. Blue Line Site Solutions from Atlantic Mine will be

hired to perform the work this Spring. This will be similar to the work that we had performed several years ago to our own property.

Lot 28 was part of the original Champion Mine site. Located on this lot is a six sided building that houses a 100,000 gallon riveted steel tank that originally served as the starting point for the historic Copper Range Water Utility. At some point in the past this tank was removed from service and abandoned.

By clearing the vegetation we will improve the view of the water tank building and of our site from the nearby Bill Nicholls ORV trail.

This effort is also being partially paid for by a generous \$3,600 Keweenaw Destination Development Award from Visit Keweenaw. These funds will be matched 50/50 by PM&S.

You can see a site survey and other related photographs by scanning the QR code.



Tram Car

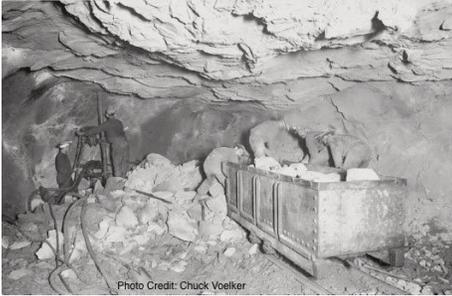


Photo Credit: Chuck Voelker

Photo Credit: Chuck Voelker

One of the joys of volunteering at the Champion is the sense of discovery felt while working there. On a regular occasion interesting new information comes to light about the structure and the artifacts found on our site. A recent example is related to a tram car that we have on display. Until recently, no one could tell us about the provenance of the tram car. It was just there.

Last fall John McKenna, a local mining expert who helped close down the Champion Mine in 1967, gave us the rest of the story. When the Champion Mine was being shut down for the last time, the

company recovered any underground equipment that was deemed to be valuable enough to save. Apparently this tram car was not considered worth saving. The company said "Leave it." Mr. McKenna took it on himself to save the car and brought it to the surface.

It was initially put on display on the property of the Copper Range Historical Museum in South Range. At some unknown point in time it was moved to the Champion #4 site where it is now on display. It is now housed inside of our shaft house.

Thank you John for saving this fantastic piece of Champion Mine history!

If you would like to see more images related to this tram car, including current condition and an old blueprint, scan the QR code.



Informational Sign

PM&S will be installing a large informational sign along the Bob Nicholls ORV trail. We hope to help catch the attention of passing riders. Volunteers are currently working hard to finalize the design that will be used. The sign will be made by Pannier Graphics in Gibsonia, PA.

This 4' x 8' sign is being partially paid for by a matching Keweenaw Destination Development Award from Visit Keweenaw.

Scan the QR code to view three views of the planned location for the sign.



Tours

The 2023 tour season is quickly approaching and we are anticipating another busy season this summer. We will once again be hosting open hours on Saturdays from noon until 4:00 pm beginning May 27th and running to the end of color season (~October 1) with special dates in between.

Ground level tours will continue to remain free, but with the opening of the upper levels of the shaft house, a \$10.00 per adult donation is going to be necessary to tour the upper levels. These tours will have limited capacity and operate on a first-come-first-serve basis. There will be set times during the day that the rockhouse tours are offered. The exact times and format are not known at the writing of this newsletter. This is a new type of tour experience for

us, so we are going to remain flexible at the start on figuring out what works for our organization and volunteer tour guides to provide the best experience for visitors. Please check out our Facebook and website or email us for exact tour information for your visit as the season progresses. Please have patience with us but certainly come visit!

Are you planning a family reunion in the Copper County area next summer? Are you looking for a fun activity to keep everyone busy? If so, consider arranging a tour of the Champion as a family activity. If you are interested in arranging a private tour please contact us at painesdalemine@gmail.com for logistics.



Ledger Compilation

Last fall we received a donation of a pallet full of ledgers that had been recovered from the Mine Office in Painesdale. Among these books were the annual payroll ledgers from 8 years of the Champion Mine's operation. These ledgers, when added to those already owned by PM&S bring the total to 22 years of payroll ledgers. The years include: 1909, 1913 (partial), 1914 (partial), 1922, 1927, 1929, 1930, 1932, 1934-1937, 1940, 1944-1948, and 1951-1955.

These ledgers have been scanned and then processed through optical recognition software to create a database of worker names. This database contains the names of the people who worked for the Champion Mining Company during those years. Each name entry has a link back to the digital image of the original scanned page containing the name. This database is now available online at no cost. It is provided as both an Excel document and as a PDF document.

In order to keep this project to a manageable size, only the employees listed as working in May of a year were recorded. The month of May was selected in order to create a "snapshot" of the number of employees in a given year. This month was selected

because it fell in the middle of the ledger's pages and so usually sustained less water damage during its years of abandonment.

It should also be noted that the employees recorded in the ledgers were not only underground miners. Managers, surface workers, workers at the Champion Mill in Freda and the staff at the Trimountain Hospital were each included on separated pages.

PM&S would like to thank Richard Whiteman and Matt Portfleet for their efforts in saving these important historic documents.

Many individuals and organizations are to be thanked for saving these ledgers. Please let us know if you have a story about saving records from the old mine office. We would love to hear from you!

We have made this database available in two formats. Both the Excel version and the PDF version can be accessed via the QR code.

Only the PDF version has annotations that provide information related to the ledgers. The PDF version is searchable and close to 500 pages long.



Memories: Member Note 03/2023

I recently read the Fall 2022 edition of the Painesdale Mine and Shaft newsletter online, which contained a very interesting story on Mathew Laru's obituary. Matt was my great-grandfather, and one of his four sons, Edward, was my grandfather. As you noted in the article, Edward also worked in the mine. Edward died in an accident while on his way to work at the mine on January 5, 1953. After his death, my grandmother Ingrid Laru (née Wendell) continued to raise their three children in the company house they lived in at 144 Douglass Street in Painesdale. My late uncle, their oldest child, was 15 at the time my grandfather died. All their kids recall growing up in a loving home with their parents. Grandma was a very special person who lived in the Douglass Street house for the rest of her life, while my uncle lived just a block away on Concord Street until his passing. My mom and dad lived with Grandma Laru after they got married

until my dad graduated from Michigan Tech and they moved away from the UP for my dad's first job. Our family moved to other places over the years, but we always spent long summer vacations in Painesdale visiting Grandma and other extended family, going to Misery Bay, the South Range Fourth of July parade, and the Strawberry Festival in Chassell. Grandma and Grandpa's house has been gone for many years, but I'll never forget the wonderful memories of the time we spent there. Despite visiting Painesdale a lot as a kid, I never really understood what role the Champion Mine played in the story of the Laru family. The Painesdale Mine and Shaft website has certainly helped me learn more about that part of our family story.

I'm looking forward to the possibility of joining one of the tours the next time I'm visiting the area.

-David



New Gift Shop Item! Placemats



Painesdale Mine & Shaft would like to introduce the newest collection of unique items that we will be stocking in our gift shop this coming season.

Our regular readers will be aware of our ongoing project to digitize the

paper records that belonged to the Copper Range Company. Many of these records were rescued from the abandoned Mine Office in Painesdale, MI. In an effort to bring these incredible documents to the public's attention, we have created a series of 11" X 17" placemats. Each placemat has been reproduced on a commercial high resolution printer using high quality heavy weight paper. We then thermally laminated each placemat to protect it. Each placemat is printed back-to-back with related images found in our digital archives.

We currently have available 6 different placemats for \$10.00 each. Get four or more for \$9.00 each. We are able to ship these via the U.S. Postal Service for a fixed cost of \$12.00. They will also be available in our gift shop. For more information email us at: painesdalemine@gmail.com.

The PM&S Board would like to give a shout out to Aden and Tom at The Print Shop in Houghton, MI. Their extraordinary efforts have allowed us to bring you this series of unique mementos from the Copper Country.

Scan the QR code to view all the designs for the placemats.



Cap Lamps Donated

From time to time our members will contact us to let us know that they have an artifact of interest that they would like to donate. One such example are these battery powered cap lamps of the style used in the last few years of the Champion's operation. They were donated by member Dan Holcomb of Painesdale, MI. Dan found these cap lamps in the garage of his Painesdale house when he moved in a few years ago.

These rechargeable battery operated lamps were placed in a recharging station that was located in a small backroom on the ground level of the Champion #4 shafthouse.

The following description of the model R4 Cap Lamp was found on the website of the National Museum of American History:

Manufactured around 1930, the Edison Safety Mining Lamp consisted of a battery enclosed in a self-locking steel case worn on the miner's belt. A flexible cord connected the battery to the lamp, which was worn on a mining cap. The battery could power the six-candlepower lamps for 12 hours and was recharged at the end of a miner's shift. This lamp is the R4 model.



These cap lamps are in excellent condition. While they show evidence of use they look like they are ready to be plugged into a charging station.



Scan the QR code at left to visit the National Museum of American History page that catalogs the model R cap lamp.

Scan the QR code at right to view several photos of miners taken with their cap lamps on. Also included are some close up views of the two donated lamps.



Thank You Donors

As noted in previous sections of the newsletter, we recently completed large projects in all three of our buildings. Our efforts to preserve these wonderful historic structures would not be possible without our members and donors. Any donation, big or small, helps ensure that future visitors will be able to learn about the important history of the Champion Mine. We are proud to be a part of this work, and would like to thank all of you for providing us with the necessary support to create an engaging and informative visitor experience.

Our patron donors especially have truly helped us move mountains with these projects and we are deeply grateful. Thank you to patrons and members for your continued support as we continue saving and sharing this history with everyone.

General Donations

- David Louks
- Anonymous Donor
- Elaine Putrich
- Anthony & Kay Briski
- Jean Belkonen
- Anonymous Donor
- Jack Rades
- Judy Albee
- Tadych's Grocery
- Forrest Hazel
- Bruce Groeneveld
- JoEllen Albertson
- Deborah Frontiera

Patron

- John & Marcia Blom
- Frederick Sterk
- Bruce Feuerstein
- Vince & Retta Kanthak
- George Hackbrandt
- Jim Ollila
- Anonymous Donor
- Anonymous Donor

New Life

- Glen & Karen (Mattson) Bryan
- Charles & Sandra Craibe
- Steve Rosswurm
- John Miller
- Brian McGunegle

Renew Life

- Jane Dykowski
- Jim Enright
- Marian Mattila
- Nanette Schulte
- Harold Wilson
- Harvey Barkley
- Jay & Patty Dunstan
- Harold Wilson

New Annual

- William Bond
- Greg Stewart
- Carl Koerschner
- Steve Bonicatto
- Mike Bouman
- Jim Bonicatto
- Carl Craven
- Jean Pemberton
- Dale Wuokko
- Jacquie Schudlach
- Lillian Moffatt
- Jackson Lynn Paavo
- Isaac William Paavo
- Andrew Michael Paavo
- Greg William Paavo
- Todd Taskila
- Donna Karuonen

- Richard McCrate
- Steve & Diane Giese
- Sharon & Jim Tronti

Renew Annual

- Jim & Sharon Tronti
- Sandra Mickalich-Mahr
- Jodie Schmidt
- Otto Dickow
- Bonnie Wolff
- Donna Karuonen
- Todd Taskila
- Barbara Manninen
- Marilyn (Maltz) Laru
- Donald Mattson
- Sandra Mahr
- Anita Pakkala
- Linda Manninen Adams
- Deborah Frontiera

Organizational Grants

- Steven C. Leuthold Family Foundation.
- Keweenaw National Historical Park
- Visit Keweenaw
- Keweenaw Area Community Foundation

Donate/Become a Member

Become a member and support our efforts to preserve the Champion #4 Shaft-Rockhouse.

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Yearly Member \$10

_____ Life Member \$100

_____ Patron \$1000

_____ 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.

