

# Brenda Papke Photograph Collection

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Finding aid written in English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections

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Houghton, , 49931

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<http://www.lib.mtu.edu/mtuarchives/>

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## Summary Information

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**Repository:** Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections

**Title:** Brenda Papke Photograph Collection

**Identifier:** MS-963

**Date:** circa 1935-circa 2008

**Date:** Majority of material found within 1950-1971

**Physical Description:** 0.01 Cubic Feet (1 folder)

**Container Information:** Sc\_box 6, Folder: 13 (Mixed Materials)

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## Overview

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Photographs and one postcard, circa 1935-circa 2008, depicting Copper Country people, places, and events, including construction projects and the county sanatorium.

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## Language of Materials

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English

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## Preferred Citation

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MS-963, Brenda Papke Photograph Collection, Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan.

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## Conditions Governing Access

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Available for use in the Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections.

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## Conditions Governing Use

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Various copying restrictions apply. Guidelines are available from Michigan Technological University Archives & Copper Country Historical Collections.

## Collection Scope and Content Summary

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Photographs and one postcard, circa 1935-circa 2008, depicting Copper Country people, places, and events, including construction projects and the sanatorium in Houghton County. The sanatorium photographs, which constitute the bulk of the collection, appear to have been taken surreptitiously by patients themselves; they offer remarkably candid insight into the personalities, experiences, and living conditions of local tuberculosis patients in 1950. A class photograph from the Isle Royale School near Dodgeville, images of construction projects in Houghton, a postcard depicting the Quincy #2 shaft-rockhouse, and a scene from a 1960 parade in South Range are also included.

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## Historical Note

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Although the Brenda Papke Photograph Collection includes materials with a wide topical focus, the majority pertain to the local sanatorium.

The Copper Country Sanatorium began its life as the Houghton County Sanatorium, a facility for the treatment of tuberculosis (TB) established after county voters approved a bond measure for its construction in 1910. Officials erected the structure on a plot of civic land that perched on a bluff near the Houghton Canal Road, not far from the county's residential facility for the indigent. In keeping with the prevailing treatment philosophies of the time, which called for ample fresh air and natural light, the wood-frame building featured a large screen porch to which patients were escorted on days of favorable weather.

Initially, the sanatorium was intended to house just twelve patients, but local medical professionals quickly found the small capacity inadequate for the large population of TB patients. The charitable Anti-Tuberculosis Association opened two outpatient clinics in Houghton and Calumet, easing some of the strain on the sanatorium by diagnosing, enforcing quarantines of, and providing essential supplies to individuals with less advanced cases of the disease. In 1915, the Houghton County Sanatorium completed an expansion that tripled its patient population, which could now be housed in twenty-four private and six double rooms.

Despite the best efforts of physicians and nurses, however, the Copper Country continued to struggle against TB with little success for many years. The death rate from the disease in Houghton and Keweenaw counties was higher than anywhere else in the state and nearly double the average for Michigan as a whole: 117 deaths per 100,000 people in 1930 compared to 60 deaths per 100,000 people statewide that year. Dr. James Acocks, a physician who joined the sanatorium's staff later in the 1930s, recalled that public health officials advanced many potential explanations for the apparent epidemic in mining country but never definitively determined the cause.

In the late 1920s, leaders of the sanatorium, attempting to diminish the association of the hospital with the county poor farm, changed its name to the Copper Country Sanatorium. This was the first in a series of significant changes to come for TB treatment in Houghton County. Faced with a sustained and high demand for inpatient services, the directors elected to enclose the vaunted screen porches and convert them to patient rooms, expanding the hospital's capacity to sixty-five. With advances in medical technology and the addition of surgically-trained doctors to the staff, the Copper Country Sanatorium found itself in need of other improvements to the building. A grant from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1940 allowed for the creation of a purpose-built X-ray room, improved space for exams, and offices to house the outpatient clinics for which the sanatorium had assumed responsibility several years earlier.

Within the decade, however, it had become apparent that the hospital was outdated. A mid-1940s state

inspection report described the structure as “a run-down building” and “an obvious fire trap.” With modest assistance from the state government and several years of concerted fundraising, the county constructed a more modern facility near St. Joseph’s Hospital (later Portage View Hospital) in Hancock; the brick building, which eventually boasted space for 150 patients, opened in 1950.

The tide had finally turned against TB in Houghton County by this time. Gradually, the flood of tuberculosis patients slowed to a trickle. By 1966, when the last director of the sanatorium resigned due to his own poor health, the decision was made to discontinue dedicated TB treatment in Houghton County. Individuals still requiring this care relocated to the Morgan Heights Sanatorium in Marquette, and other long-term patients moved into the Copper Country Sanatorium building, which was renamed the Houghton County Medical Care Facility.

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## Processing History

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Emily Riippa, 7/26/2017

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Construction projects -- Michigan -- Copper Country
- Dodgeville (Mich.)
- Education, Primary -- Michigan -- Upper Peninsula
- Hospitals -- Michigan -- Upper Peninsula
- Houghton (Mich.)
- Michigan Technological University
- Photographic prints
- Postcards
- Sanatorium
- South Range (Mich.)
- Tuberculosis

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## Collection Inventory

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**Envelope of Copper Country Sanatorium photographs (33), 1950**

**Date:** 1950

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**"Keweenaw Land of Michigan's Copper Country" (Quincy #2 shaft-rockhouse) postcard, circa 1935**

**Date:** circa 1935

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**Parade in South Range, July 1960**

**Date:** July 1960

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**Houghton road construction, circa 2008**

**Date:** circa 2008

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**Houghton road construction, circa 2008**

**Date:** circa 2008

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**Student Development Center (SDC) groundbreaking, circa 1971**

**Date:** circa 1971

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**Isle Royale School sixth grade photograph, 1938-1939**

**Date:** 1938-1939

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**Isle Royale School sixth grade photograph identifications**