

# Guide To Researching Michigan Copper Mining Companies

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## Mining Company Publications

Most Michigan copper mining companies were public stock corporations and as such were required to publish annual reports to their shareholders. The Michigan Tech Archives has one of the most comprehensive collections of published corporate reports for the region. Annual reports usually include capitalization, executive, development, production, profit, and construction details. Most also include a narrative report from the local superintendent or agent with specific information of development work conducted on a year-by-year basis. Researchers should remain critical of the information, particularly financial reporting, contained in these resources; it is not uncommon to find these published reports putting a positive spin on years of lackluster performance. Corporate annual reports are cataloged on the Library's online catalog, Voyager.

## PUBLISHED HISTORIES

### General Histories

A wide variety of titles provide general background to Copper Country history and the development of copper mining in the Keweenaw Peninsula. Included are older titles, such as *History of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan* (1883, F572.N8 H67), which provide contemporary accounts of mines and mining companies, and modern publications, such as *Lankton's Cradle to Grave* (1991, HD 9539.C7 U548) and *Thurner's Strangers and*

Sojourners (1994, F572.K43), which provide academic analysis of the social and technological development of Keweenaw mines and communities. A list of suggested readings is available from the Michigan Tech Archives.

### **Histories of Specific Mining Companies**

Many Keweenaw mines have had books and pamphlets published detailing their history, development and ultimate demise. Books such as Benedict's Red Metal, detailing Calumet & Helca (TN443.M5 B4r), Lankton & Hyde's Old Reliable, concerning Quincy (HD9539.C72 Q54), Hollingsworth's Atlantic (F574.A8 H6), and Fields' Range of Opportunity, detailing the Copper Range Company (TN443.Z6 C621), as well as numerous publications by local historians such as Clarence Monette and Don Clarke, provide historical overview of individual company stories.

Most published histories are cataloged on the Library's online catalog, Voyager.

### **Published Reference Works and Governmental Reports**

Varying information concerning Michigan copper mining companies is recorded in directories, reference books and governmental reports. Of particular interest are:

- Michigan Mineral Statistics (1877-1911, TN24.M5 A1). Published annual report of the Michigan Commissioner of Mineral Statistics, reviewing operations of copper and iron mines in the state. Quality and content of information concerning specific mines varies from year to year, but many editions include maps and production information in addition to a narrative review of annual operations.
- Copper Handbook / Mines Register (1900-1971, TN13.M64). Originally designed to provide investor information for Michigan copper mines. Eventually expanded to include other American copper mines and international corporations, too. Entries generally report capitalization and production/profit information on an annual or semi-annual basis. Some entries are brief, but others run several pages and provide significant detail of surface and underground operations.
- USGS Professional Paper 144 (1929, QE75.A1p) Officially titled The Copper Deposits of Michigan, this publication by the US Geological Survey was the seminal federal study of Michigan's copper mining district. The report includes general geological analysis of the Keweenaw area, but also provides production and dividend information for all Michigan copper mines to the date of publication. Also provides valuable information linking individual mines operating along continuous mineral lodes. Good index and accompanying set of folding maps.
- Other publications provide additional detail. Many brokerage houses published reviews of mining companies; see D. Houston & Co.'s Copper Manual (1897-1899, TN440.H8) and Copper (1906, TN440.H8c) as well as Paine, Webber's A Few Points on the Copper Mines (1898, TN443.M5 J8).

### **Magazine / Journal Articles**

The main Library collection includes a comprehensive set of trade journals and serial titles from the mining industry. Titles such as *The Mining Congress Journal*, *Transactions of the American Institute of Mining Engineers (AIME)*, *The Mining & Scientific Press*, and the *Engineering and Mining Journal* regularly published contemporary accounts of Michigan copper mines, particularly construction of new facilities and development of new processes. The larger part of this journal collection remains under the control of the Van Pelt Library and researchers are referred to the Library's main reference desk for support in accessing this valuable material. Of particular interest to Michigan mine research, however, are the following serial titles held in the Michigan Tech Archives:

- *Proceedings of the Lake Superior Mining Institute (1896-1939, TN1.L1)*. LSMI was a professional organization of mining engineers in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Ontario, Canada. Their annual meetings rotated around the mining districts of the Lake Superior basin. Meetings included paper presentations of a wide variety of topics, including contemporary accounts of specific mine operations and historical pieces about the region. An index to the complete set of LSMI proceedings is located the 1939 volume.
- *Proceedings of the Institute on Lake Superior Geology (1955-present, QE78.I5)*. ILSG tends to focus more closely on geological topics, yet like the LSMI, their annual meetings move around the region and many of their published proceedings include detailed information on mines and mining companies. The 1984 meeting, for instance, was held in Houghton and generated the *Bornhorst & Rose Self-Guided Geological Field Guide to the Keweenaw Peninsula (QE78.I5 1994, pt. 2)*, an invaluable reference book to both the geologic and mining history of the Michigan copper district.

### Newspapers

The Michigan Tech Archives has been actively involved in the microfilm preservation of newspapers titles in the Copper Country. The Archives holds more than 1,000 reels of film covering almost 70 separate titles from Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Some of the more significant titles for the Copper Country region include:

- *Lake Superior Journal (Copper Harbor, 1846-1865)*
- *Lake Superior Miner (Ontonagon, 1855-1859, 1867-1870)*
- *Portage Lake Mining Gazette / Daily Mining Gazette (Houghton, 1862-1897 / 1899-present)*
- *Copper Country Evening News / Calumet News (Calumet, 1896-1907 / 1907-1938)*
- *Torch Lake Times / Native Copper Times (Lake Linden, 1887-1893 / 1893-1971)*
- *Ontonagon Herald (Ontonagon, 1890-present)*

None of these papers is indexed, however, so researchers will need specific dates and events to locate relevant information. The Daily Mining Gazette published a local history section from the 1950's through the 1970's called The Green Sheet that regularly reported on area mining companies and mine locations. A cursory index to Green Sheet articles is available in the Archives reading room.

### **Abstract Files**

An extensive set of files was compiled by Calumet & Hecla in support of the publication of USGS Professional Paper 144. Files contain information abstracted from a variety of sources including newspaper and magazine articles, published stockholder reports, mine superintendent reports, state and federal geological surveys, and unpublished company reports. Many files include blueprint maps of underground workings, surface buildings and property ownership. More than one hundred mines and mining companies are detailed. Calumet & Hecla continued to update the files following the 1929 USGS publication, using them to maintain information on their local competitors.

### **Copper Country Vertical Files**

Compiled by staff of the Michigan Tech Archives, drawing primarily from newspaper and magazine articles published since 1978. Some files include pamphlets, short publications, copies of book chapters, manuscript letters, loose company records, and maps. Earlier material is added as time allows. Vertical files are also a "catch-all" for any material on specific companies that doesn't fit into other collections of the department. As such they are valuable resources which often provided unexpected information.

### **Mining Company Manuscript Collections**

The Michigan Tech Archives holds more than 200 manuscript collections covering the broad gamut of social, commercial and municipal history in the four county area. It is unusual for the corporate records of smaller Michigan copper mining companies to survive, but several collections have been preserved. Significant collections include the records of the Calumet & Hecla Consolidated Copper Company (and its 30+ subsidiary companies), the Quincy Mining Company, and the Copper Range Company (please note: Copper Range records have not been processed and may require significant patron time to research). Smaller collections document such mines as the Victoria Mining Company, Adventure Mining Company, Pontiac Mining Company and Franklin Mining Company.

### **Tax Records**

The Michigan Tech Archives houses original reports of mining companies to the Michigan Corporate Securities Division (1847-1920 Acc.# 50), as well as copies of appraisal reports of the Michigan Tax Commission providing valuations for iron and copper mines (1919, 1926-1952, 1967-1970, TN403.M5 M48) (more complete holdings are available at the State Archives of Michigan in Lansing). The Michigan Tech Archives also holds local property tax records for Houghton and Keweenaw Counties (1857-1975, State Archives Collection), valuable records in documenting property ownership of Michigan copper mining companies. These records provide limited

information for individual mining companies, but may prove vital in conducting comprehensive study of mining in the Keweenaw.

### **Cartographic Material (Maps)**

The map holdings of the Michigan Tech Archives are not exhaustive, but can provide surprising support to research on Michigan copper mining companies. As detailed separately above, maps often accompany mining company annual reports, publications of the Michigan Commissioner of Mineral Statistics, the US Geological Survey's Professional Paper 144, and turn up in abstract files and vertical files in the Michigan Tech Archives reading room. Additional cartographic material is housed in the department's map collection. Of particular value are a set of Sanborn-Perris fire insurance maps, which include detailed, large-scale maps of many area mining companies. The Archives maintains an index to Sanborn maps in its reading room. Researchers should also be aware of the Van Pelt Library's extensive map collection amassed through its role as a federal documents depository library. In addition to current topographical maps, the Library's collection includes many bedrock geology maps of the region which document mining sites and shaft locations.

### **Photographic Images**

Photographs can be invaluable tools in understanding the history of mining companies and are frequently used to illustrate historical texts. The Michigan Tech Archives has a collection of approximately 40,000 photographic images. The large majority of these images are preserved in negative format only, though a set of reference prints, with files on individual mining companies, is available to researchers in the Archives reading room. Separate photograph collections also exist for the Calumet & Hecla Consolidated Mining Company (and its many subsidiary operations), the Atlantic Mine area (Harold Heikkinen Collection), Quincy Mine Hoist Association (with images of many Portage lake mines).