

READER'S GUIDE
2021-2022

Presented by

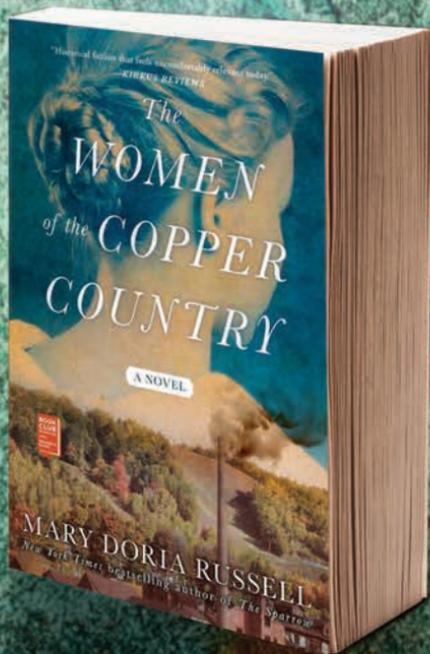
**MICHIGAN
HUMANITIES**

**GREAT
MICHIGAN
READ**



**The Women of the
Copper Country**

Mary Doria Russell



An authentic and moving historical portrait
of the lives of the early labor movement.

WHAT IS THE GREAT MICHIGAN READ?



Great Michigan Read: One title, one state, and thousands engaged in literary discussion

WHAT IS THE GREAT MICHIGAN READ?

Since 2007, the Great Michigan Read—Michigan Humanities' signature program—has bridged communities across the state with Michigan-based fiction and non-fiction titles that spark dialogue among diverse perspectives, encourage a deeper understanding of the humanities, and connect thousands of readers with authors and engaging educational programming. The 2021-2022 title—selected by six regional selection committees representing all corners of Michigan—is *The Women of the Copper Country*, by Mary Doria Russell.

WHY THE WOMEN OF THE COPPER COUNTRY?

Mary Doria Russell's novel *The Women of the Copper Country* is a fictionalized history of the 1913 copper miners' strike in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Following the story of 25-year-old strike leader, Anna "Big Annie" Klobuchar Clemenc, Russell draws our attention to the women and immigrants who risked their lives to fight unregulated capitalist exploitation.

Though copper mining in the early 20th-century may seem distant and removed from our experiences, Michigan Humanities hopes that the resources provided by the Great Michigan Read will help readers to understand how the conflicts and tensions of the past have shaped our present and how, in many ways, the conflicts surrounding classism, xenophobia, sexism, and labor from 1913 are not so different from today's.

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

Pick up a copy of *The Women of the Copper Country* and supporting materials at a participating location near you. Read the book, share and discuss it with your friends, and take part in Great Michigan Read events in your community.

Register your library, high school, college or university, book club, or other organization as an official partner to receive complimentary copies of the book, educational and promotional materials, and program and funding opportunities.

For more details, including upcoming event dates, additional resources, and online registration, visit michiganhumanities.org.

"All of my books are historical novels. It's just that some of them take place in the future." MARY DORIA RUSSELL

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#GreatMichiganRead
#MIHumanities



A SPECIAL THANKS | Michigan Humanities is grateful to the following individuals, groups, and organizations for their collaboration during the development of the 2021-22 Great Michigan Read: the regional selection committee members and committee chairs, including Trisha Baker, Seán Henne, Wendy Irish, Jessica Luther, Cathy Russ, Neil Shepard, and Sonya Hollins; Mary Doria Russell and Simon and Schuster; Library of Michigan; Jennifer Rosseter (Image Creative Group); teachers Gregory Dykhous, Peter Middleton, and Lacey O'Donnell; the Michigan Humanities Board of Directors and staff team; Jeremiah Mason and Jo Urion Holt at Keweenaw National Historical Park; Sarah Fayen Scarlett and Emily Riippa at Michigan Technological University; Julia Irion Martins (research and writing); and the statewide network of GMR partners and program resources.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR, MARY DORIA RUSSELL



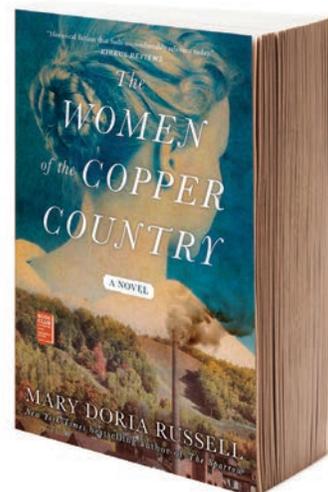
Widely praised for meticulous research, fine prose, and the compelling narrative drive of her stories, Mary Doria Russell is the award-winning author of seven bestselling novels. The subjects and genres of her novels are varied: she's written science fiction, a WWII thriller, political romances, historical fiction about the Wild West, and now *The Women of the Copper Country*. No stranger to Michigan, Russell holds a PhD in biological anthropology from the University of Michigan. She now lives in Ohio.

"Here's what good people do: We don't give up. We will not be cowed. We will refute their lies. We will get the vote, and we will use it. We will take them to court. We will march in their streets, and we will fight for justice every damned step of the way."

— *The Women of Copper Country*

Also by Mary Doria Russell

The Sparrow
Children of God
A Thread of Grace
Dreamers of the Day
Doc
Epitaph: A Novel of the O.K. Corral



Q&A WITH MARY DORIA RUSSELL

How did you come to the story of *The Women of the Copper Country*?

The idea for *The Women of the Copper Country* came literally out of left field. One afternoon I sat down to watch a ball game, and while I was waiting I started flipping through the channels. And that's when I came across the PBS documentary *Red Metal*. That evening, I mentioned on Facebook that I had watched *Red Metal* and thought that there might be a story in it for me to tell. Within minutes, my friend Rivkah Tobin emailed me to say her great-grandfather Solomon Kivisto was the last man to die in the mines before the 1913 strike began. What are the odds, right? My first reaction was: I *really* need to take you out for breakfast-tomorrow! When I initially sat down with Rivkah the next morning, I was thinking that this was all going to make a pretty straightforward good girl/bad guy story. But then Rivkah said, "Well all I can tell you is that my grandmother always spoke the names of both Annie Clemenc and James MacNaughton with reverence." And that's when I started to dig deeper.

Which part of the novel did you enjoy writing the most?

Writing the Mother Jones chapters is the most fun I have ever had as a writer. It was a privilege to write a story that honors the work and sacrifice and idealism of women who dared to change the world. I felt lucky to live in a world made by Annie Clemenc, Ella Bloor, Mother Jones, and so many other women activists who never became famous. This novel is a celebration of their legacy and a vow to carry on their work.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT
MARY DORIA RUSSELL PLEASE VISIT:
marydoriarussell.net

AN EXCERPT FROM *THE WOMEN OF THE COPPER COUNTRY*



“

...a grainy, gray photograph of young women marching, banners held high, proclaiming, “WE WANT BREAD BUT ROSES TOO!” Money men called that frivolous. Working people understood. Some in this world have more than they can ever need or use or spend or enjoy. Why shouldn't we get just a little extra, just a little more than bread alone?” (Page 41)

Excerpts from *The Women of Copper Country*.

“

“The old woman reaches across the table. Her fingers are knobby with arthritis; the skin of her hands is almost transparent, roped with purple veins and blotched with bruises. Annie's bones are long and straight, her skin cracked from washing laundry and floors, marred with small cuts and burns from kitchen work. For a few moments, they grip each other, both fighting tears. Then Mother Jones lets go and flops back against the wooden chair, her rheumy eyes hard.

“When this is over, Annie is going to get the blame,” she warns Eva. “You have to be ready for that, child. It won't just be the bosses, either. The press will turn on her. Even the union men will blame her—all of them. Here, out west, down south. They'll say she went off half-cocked with no strike fund. They'll say she was foolish, trying to win a war with just little children carrying flags and banners—and,

oh, now isn't that just like a woman! She should have listened to the good counsel of the men who've played this game for a long time and know how to win it. But really? They'll blame her because she made them feel ashamed.”

She leans over the table and whispers fiercely, “Do you know what really brought young Joan of Arc to that stake in the end? They burned her because that girl *succeeded*, if only for a little while, where all those fine, noble aristocratic generals had failed!” (Russell 169-170).



Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, MTU Photograph Collection and Calumet & Hecla Photograph Collection



NPS, Kenmore NP, CH Strike Album, #002 Annie Clamenc (8th Arm), Ben Goggin, 1915

“It's almost too easy.
Promise these morons something they want.
Let them believe in it.
Then take it away. And tell them who's
to blame.”

MARY DORIA RUSSELL



BREAD AND ROSES BY JAMES OPPENHEIM, 1911

*As we come marching, marching, in the beauty of the day,
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill-lofts gray
Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun discloses,
For the people hear us singing, "Bread and Roses, Bread and Roses."*

*As we come marching, marching, we battle, too, for men—
For they are women's children and we mother them again.
Our days shall not be sweated from birth until life closes—
Hearts starve as well as bodies: Give us Bread, but give us Roses.*

*As we come marching, marching, unnumbered women dead
Go crying through our singing their ancient song of Bread;
Small art and love and beauty their trudging spirits knew—
Yes, it is Bread we fight for—but we fight for Roses, too.*

*As we come marching, marching, we bring the Greater Days—
The rising of the women means the rising of the race.
No more the drudge and idler—ten that toil where one reposes—
But a sharing of life's glories: Bread and Roses, Bread and Roses.*



The phrase “Bread and Roses” originates from a 1910 speech by worker's rights advocate and suffragist Helen Todd; the speech famously inspired the James Oppenheim poem by the same name. Though it is commonly associated with the 1912 textile worker's strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts (the “Bread and Roses Strike”), the phrase has come to be more widely associated with working women's rights. By joining a necessary item (bread) with a luxury item (roses), the slogan makes an appeal for both fair wages and dignified conditions.



American women's suffrage activist Helen Todd.

Wikimedia Commons

MINING

IN MICHIGAN'S KEWEENAW PENINSULA



A good day in the mine is a day when nobody gets killed or crippled. Or if somebody does, at least it's not you."

The Women of the Copper Country



Wikimedia Commons

THE DEMAND FOR COPPER

While copper has been used for centuries for tools and sheathing, demand for

the material skyrocketed in the late 19th-century. Suddenly, copper was necessary for electrical wiring, plumbing pipe, and automobile parts.

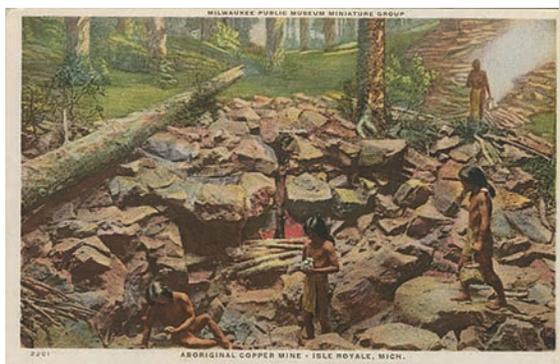
KEWEENAW GEOLOGY

Formed by the Portage Lake Volcanics, the Keweenaw Peninsula had the largest deposit of pure elemental copper in the world—seven thousand years ago, the copper in the Keweenaw was so pure that it could be used straight from the ground. Underground copper ore existed in the Keweenaw in two formations: amygdaloid and conglomerate. Notably, the Copper Country was the first mining region in the US in which land was sold directly to companies rather than leased to miners by the government.

THE OJIBWA

Records of people living in the Keweenaw date back to 5500 BCE. When French explorers arrived to the Keweenaw in the 1600s,

The Indigenous peoples of the Keweenaw began mining and using copper to make tools as early as 5000 BCE.



Wikimedia Commons

the indigenous peoples living there were the Ojibwa, who had been in the area since 500 CE. Shortly after contact, the French, followed by the British and the Americans began to push the Ojibwa out of the region and colonize. The United States officially took the Keweenaw Peninsula in 1842.

After colonization, Ojibwa people remained in the area. One such woman was Cora Reynolds Anderson. In 1924, Reynolds Anderson ran for state office, becoming the first woman to serve in Michigan's House of Representatives and the first indigenous woman to serve in a state legislature.

THE COPPER INDUSTRY TODAY

Today, the world's leading copper producers are Chile, Peru, China, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The United States is the world's fifth largest copper producer, with the industry located primarily in the Southwest and Montana.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Mining was dangerous and unrelenting work—the men in the mines worked 10 hour shifts, six days a week. Between the 1840s and the 1960s, the Lake Superior mines took



Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Centennial Collection

at least 1900 lives—about 50% of those deaths occurred between 1900 and 1920.

Miners—the men actually drilling into the rock—were considered “skilled workers.” These men worked in teams not only because the technology required it, but also because it was safer. If an accident happened, their partner could

Quincy Mine Tour

Visitors to the Keweenaw can go into the mines and learn about industrial history and geology at the Quincy Mine Tour in Hancock.

run for help—however, the one-man drill threatened this system.

Trammers—primarily the recent immigrants from Finland, Italy, and Eastern Europe—were considered “unskilled.” Their work was backbreaking: they loaded tram carts with three tons of rock and pushed those carts to the shafts, a distance of between 300 and 1500 feet.

Calumet and Hecla Mine History



Mine workers at Hecla Mine shaft No. 2, Calumet, Mich.

Like all copper mines in the region, C&H was funded by investors on the East Coast starting in 1865. After a slow start, the company became a powerhouse under the leadership of Boston-born naturalist Alexander Agassiz. After Agassiz's death in 1910, C&H continued its

success under James MacNaughton. The company functioned with a corporate paternalist model and had remarkably low turnover rates. In 1914, out of a workforce of slightly under 5000, 1660

of the men had worked for them for 15 years or longer. At its peak, C&H was producing over 14 million pounds of copper annually and supplied nearly half of the United States' copper and paid out more than \$3 million in shareholder dividends in 1912 alone—equivalent to \$83 million today.

Library of Congress

LIVING IN CALUMET



Few things are so gratifying to James MacNaughton as showing Calumet to investors when they arrive in this remote outpost for the first time. ‘Paris on Mars,’ he murmurs.”

The Women of the Copper Country



Houghton Street Scene

Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Reader Photograph Collection



Main Street of Houghton

Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Reader Photograph Collection

A COMPANY TOWN

Three hundred and forty miles from the closest major city (Milwaukee), the Copper Country mine towns began as small, rugged frontier towns. But, as the companies grew, they had to provide amenities that would attract employees and their families to the remote Upper Peninsula. Companies built churches, public schools, libraries, bathhouses, hospitals, and houses. These facilities were very modern and served as spaces for cross-class and cross-cultural interaction. The high schools in Calumet—attended by children of miners

and managers alike—were among the best in the nation, boasting one of the top college prep programs as well as technical training programs that prepared boys for mining jobs and women for housework. But this generosity was also a form of social control: yes, companies provided libraries that stayed open until 10pm, but they only did so to deter their employees from “immoral” activities such as going to local bars, brothels, and dancehalls.

Unlike many company towns, the mining companies in the Keweenaw did not run commercial enterprises nor did they own all the land. Grocery stores, department stores, bars, photography studios, and hotels were run privately (though sometimes companies partnered with particular merchants) and often by immigrants. The Calumet WFM offices were also, of course, not on company-owned property.

FROM FRONTIER TO COSMOPOLIS

In 1900, the population density of Calumet was equivalent to that of Manhattan today. Copper Country towns were necessarily compact: the mining companies didn’t want buildings built atop potential copper deposits, so homes and stores were built upwards and on triple plots. Calumet’s downtown core had

DISCUSSION

Though we don’t often think of urban, suburban, and industrial landscapes as overlapping, Copper Country architecture and urban planning demonstrates this combination is possible. How can we see these three landscapes overlapping in other parts of Michigan? How do these overlapping landscapes affect our daily lives?



St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church, Calumet

Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Calumet Area Photographs Collection

apartments above stores, many of which were not unlike NYC apartments—some had up to eight rooms and all had service entrances through the back.

The architecture in Copper Country towns was (and remains to this day) varied and beautiful. Architects, contractors, and interior designers were brought in from Marquette, Chicago, and Milwaukee. Designing a building in Calumet was somewhat of a “proving ground” for architects who wanted to make it in big Midwestern cities such as Chicago and Milwaukee.

Midwestern socialites traveled to Calumet for events; the train station provided overnight service to Chicago; the town boasted a 50-seat brokerage with wires direct to Wall Street; and the Calumet Theatre brought in touring Broadway acts and other popular performances.



George C. Sheldon’s house, located in an elite neighborhood in Houghton, MI. G.C. Sheldon was the son of the prominent entrepreneur and early settler, Ransom B. Sheldon.

Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Bay Oler Collection



Ford Motors enticed workers to move south to Detroit, where wages were \$5 per day.

Benson Ford Research Center

CHRONOLOGY

THE MINERS’ DECISION TO ORGANIZE

1870-1903

- Unionization efforts begin with the International Workingmen’s Association and the Knights of Labor.

The Western Federation of Miners arrives in 1903.

1910

- Companies begin investing in one-man drills.

STRIKE EVENTS

July 1913

- Strike begins and Democratic governor Woodbridge Ferris somewhat reluctantly sends in the National Guard.

August 1913

- Strikebreakers, scabs, and detectives brought in.
- Mines begin to reopen on a reduced basis three weeks into the strike.
- Seeberville Affair: unionists killed at home

by thugs from the company hired Waddell-Mahon Agency.

November 1913

- Blizzard strikes, killing 250 in the Great Lakes area.

December 1913

- Painesdale Shooting, Italian Hall Disaster, and WFM president Charles Moyer run out of town.

February-March 1914

- Inconclusive congressional investigation takes place.

DECLINE OF COPPER MINING IN MICHIGAN

April 1914

- Union runs out of money and the strike ends.
- Workers move south to Detroit, where Ford

Motors is offering wages of \$5 per day.

1929-1939

- The Great Depression forces many mines to close.

1968

- Last active mine closes.

MINING HOUSES



The servants have been moved to a new wing at the back of the property; this change has achieved a more decorous division between family and staff, well worth the disruption endured as the house was remodeled.”

The Women of the Copper Country

MINERS' HOMES

In building single-family homes rather than boarding houses, companies used architecture to announce their preference for married men, who they understood as more reliable workers. By 1913, the regional companies altogether owned 3,524 homes they rented to workers. At \$5 per month

for a 5-bedroom house, these houses were a great deal. All had middle-class amenities such as porches and hallways (which helped to uphold middle-class notions of family privacy) and some even had indoor plumbing. Due to xenophobia towards non-English speaking immigrants, companies disproportionately allocated housing to English speakers, leaving some families on housing waitlists for up to ten years.

Many miners' wives chose to run their homes as boarding houses, going directly against companies' anti-boarding house stances. Doing so was arduous work: women cooked, cleaned, and cared for several adult men as well as their children. But it paid off—many women were able to earn more than their husbands, more than doubling their families' monthly income!



A company owned house rented for \$1 per room. Miner's earned about \$2.50 per day. The stove is pictured, right, and the sink, left, had cold running water. Circa 1913.

COMPLEMENTARY READING AND VIEWING

Find additional Great Michigan Read resources at michiganhumanities.org.

Greater Connections

Haste to Rise, Franklin Hughes and David Pilgrim

Bread & Roses, Bruce Watson

A Camera in the Garden of Eden, Kevin Coleman

The Chinese and the Iron Road, edited by Gordon H. Chang and Shelley Fisher Fishkin



ABOUT THE COPPER COUNTRY

Grown-Up Anger, Daniel Wolff

Mine Towns, Alison K. Hoagland

Community in Conflict, Aaron Goings and Gary Kaunonen

Cradle to Grave, Larry Lanckton

Company Suburbs, Sarah Fayen Scarlett

To the Copper Country: Mihaela's Journey, Barbara Carney-Coston



POETRY

"The New Colossus," Emma Lazarus

"The Chimney Sweeper," William Blake

"I Hear America Singing," Walt Whitman

"Chicago," Carl Sandburg

"Filling Station," Elizabeth Bishop

GMR Action Grants

Considering ways that your organization can enrich a local Great Michigan Read (GMR) conversation with guest speakers, complementary resources, and more? Michigan Humanities provides funding of up to \$750 to support GMR partners' community programming.

Visit michiganhumanities.org for additional Action Grant details and deadlines.



Miner's company housing

Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Coluemet & Hech Photograph Collection

DISCUSSION

How does Russell use architecture and material goods to characterize MacNaughton, Annie, and other characters in *The Women of the Copper Country*? How do our homes and material goods define us?



An upper-class home interior

Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Research Photograph Collection

MANAGERS' HOMES

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, it was typical corporate practice to have managerial employees live on company

grounds, near their workers. These manager mansions were often plain on the outside, but extremely elaborate and high-tech on the inside. C&H manager James MacNaughton lived in a mansion with five rooms on each floor, multiple bathrooms, a telephone room, a refrigerator, built-in china closets, and bay windows (a marker of middle-class gentility).

The architecture and technology of these luxurious homes reflected leisure for the wealthy residents but created lots of work for the housekeeping staff. Unlike a miner entering a mine—a designated space of labor and solidarity—when a housekeeper went into work, she entered, by herself, into a space designed to hide work. Separate staircases, rear entrances, and concealed kitchens kept housekeepers and their labor mostly out of sight. These large mansions also functioned as a space of work for the elite's wives—their work, however, was managing a staff of domestic servants. Like their husbands, their work was in oversight rather than labor.

As time passed, the managerial and merchant classes chose to leave their company housing and apartments above shops and move into upper-middle-class neighborhoods to be alongside their economic equals.



AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA

Red Metal: The Copper Country Strike of 1913, dir. Jonathan Silvers

1913 Massacre, dir. Ken Ross and Louis Galdieri

"1913 Massacre," Woody Guthrie

Classic Labor Songs from Smithsonian Folkways

Keweenaw Time Traveler
www.keweenawhistory.com

IMMIGRATION TO MICHIGAN'S UPPER PENINSULA



Mobility of labor is one of the greatest safeguards against exploitation.” *Graham Taylor*



MICHIGAN IMMIGRATION AND MIGRATION HISTORY

Today, about 7% of Michiganders are immigrants and 14% of children born in Michigan are first-generation Americans. But in 1910, about 80% of the Copper Country's population alone were either immigrants or first-gen Americans.

Immigration to the region began in the 1840s. Early immigrants were mostly experienced miners from England, Ireland, and Germany. For these immigrants, language barriers were minimal and assimilation into American culture was relatively smooth. The second wave of immigrants, coming at the turn of the century, consisted mostly of Finlanders, Italians, Slovenians, and Croatians though records also show French Canadian, Chinese, and Middle Eastern immigrants in the area (though typically these immigrants did not work in the mines). By 1908, over 30 nationalities were represented in Calumet public schools!



Finnish Immigrant in hunting attire

TRADITIONS

Even though libraries and schools financed by mining companies aimed to “Americanize” immigrants and their children, churches and mutual aid organizations helped immigrants preserve their traditions and languages. By 1913, C&H had provided sites and money to more than 30 churches, as each ethnic group petitioned the company for their own church. And, while there wasn't a synagogue in Calumet (there was one about 10 miles away in Hancock), the Calumet Jewish community rented space in town halls for the High Holidays.

Along with churches, there were many mutual aid organizations run by individual ethnic groups. Members paid monthly dues to these organizations, and in return, the organization would provide monthly benefits if a member fell ill or had an accident or was otherwise unable to work.

Often, recent immigrants boarded with families from their home countries. This practice helped recent immigrants adapt to American customs and norms while providing some homeland familiarity. That said, few neighborhoods around C&H developed into true ethnic enclaves. While there may have been

Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, William Nara Photograph Collection



Pasty Recipe. A portable warm meal.

Mix 3 cups of flour with a little salt and cut in 1 and ¼ cups of fat. Add water and mix into dough. Divide into four and roll out. Layer the filling ingredients and salt as you go: finely chopped potatoes, rutabagas, onion, parsley, and maybe carrots. Top with cubed beef and pork and a pat of butter. Fold the dough over and crimp the edges. Make a one inch slit on top of the dough and bake at 400F for an hour.

ethnic clusters, miners more often lived near the mine shaft they worked.

Print media also helped to maintain heritage. In the early 1900s, Copper Country area newspapers were printed in six different languages. Some papers, such as the union run Miners' Bulletin, printed multiple languages in each issue.

“YOOPER TALK”

It wasn't until the mid-19th century that English was regularly spoken in the Copper Country. Even then, at the turn of the century, the majority of Copper Country residents weren't native English speakers. As languages mixed and people learned English from one another, a new accented English emerged: Yooper talk. One characteristic of the accent is pronouncing “sauna” the

Finnish way—“sow-na” instead of “saw-na.” Another characteristic comes from languages which don't have a “th” sound, making words like “them” and “those” sound more like “dem” and “dose.”

ANTI-IMMIGRANT SENTIMENT

Not all immigrants were treated equally. Finlanders formed 13% of the county's population in 1913, making them the largest immigrant group. They were also the most discriminated against given their reputation for socialist politics. Southern Italians were also frequently dismissed—when MacNaughton requested workers from immigration, he specified that he did not want Finlanders or southern Italians.

As the strike wore on, anti-immigrant sentiments increased. Strikers were demonized by corporate elites and anti-unionists as “foreign agitators.” This rhetoric suggests that to fight corporate greed is un-American. But to the striking workers, a nine-month strike for safe working conditions was a necessary step towards making a life in the United States.

Languages of the Keweenaw

English, German, Finnish, Croatian, Slovenian, Italian, Chinese, Arabic, French, Polish, Hungarian, Swedish



Asian immigrants to Calumet pose for a studio portrait taken by Finnish immigrant and photographer, J.W. Nara.

Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, William Nara Photograph Collection

DISCUSSION

When Graham Taylor speaks of “mobility of labor,” he means that workers should be able to leave employers that treat them poorly. In what ways do the workers in The Women of the Copper Country have mobility and in what ways does MacNaughton take advantage of worker mobility?

WOMEN'S WORK THROUGHOUT HISTORY



Further Discovery

*Ella Bloor
Jane Adams
Beatrice Potter Webb
Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha
Sarah Schulman
Myra Wolfgang
Charlotta Bass
Lillian Wald
Waunetta McClellan Dominic
Petra Allende*



When they're underground, our men can only see as far as their headlamps show. It's up to us women, here, up top, to see farther. It's up to us to say, no more!"

Annie in The Women of the Copper Country



SAINT JOAN OF ARC

A saint and national hero to the French, Joan of Arc was born to a peasant family in 1412. At the age of 17, she—under divine guidance—led the French army to victory against the English during the Hundred Years' War. Captured by the English a year later, she was burned at the stake. To this day she is a symbol of great courage.

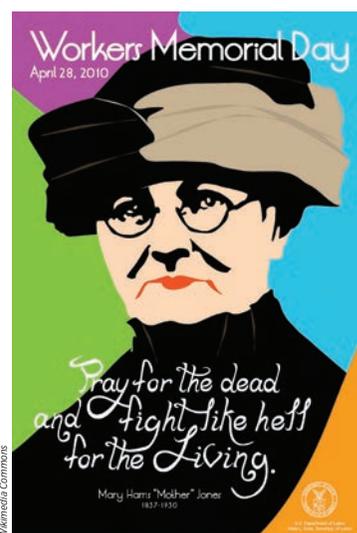
*United States Department of Labor publications
Workers Memorial Day
poster pictured Mary G. Harris Jones, or "Mother Jones."*

MOTHER JONES

Deemed "the most dangerous woman in America," Mary G. Harris Jones, or "Mother Jones," was an Irish-American labor organizer. After she lost her husband and children to yellow fever in 1867 and her dressmaking business to the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, Mother Jones went on to co-found Industrial Workers of the World and fight for worker's rights all across the United States.

ANNA "BIG ANNIE" KLOBUCHAR CLEMENC

Known as "Big Annie" because of her height (6'2"), Annie was indispensable during the 1913-1914 copper miner's strike. She founded the WFM Women's Auxiliary in Calumet, led marches and processions, and was arrested multiple times during the strike. After the strike, Annie left Calumet, moving to Chicago with journalist Frank Shavs.



DISCUSSION

Why do you think people referred to Annie as the American "Joan of Arc"?

How do these historical women activists complicate the notion that your voice

and your vote are necessarily connected? How can their legacy help us understand our power as agents of change in the political sphere regardless of our voter status?



AMS, Keweenaw NHP. C&M Strike Album. #161. Anna Clemenc, studio portrait with flag, 1913

Referred to by many as the "heart" of the strike and labor rights in the Keweenaw, working-class women showed very little interest in organizing around the right to vote. Unlike their middle- and upper-class counterparts, working-class women could not afford to be patient with social and political reform goals—the legislative process was simply too slow to achieve the changes they needed to survive. Negotiation directly with companies through union action was more efficient than electoral politics.

Women's role in the 1913 strike demonstrates that this ambivalence towards the suffrage movement should not be mistaken for a belief that women shouldn't participate in the public sphere. While Annie may have been the face of the strike, countless other women marched, organized, and were arrested for their strike-related actions. Some of these actions drew inspiration from housekeeping work: women would stop scabs from crossing picket lines by stealing their lunch pails, and if that failed they'd smear the scab with excrement, forcing him to go home and have his clothes washed!

WOMEN'S ACTIVISM

Working-class and upper-class women alike had causes they advocated for. While the working-class women of the Copper Country organized around labor issues, the middle- and upper-class women of the region were interested in advancing the suffrage movement.

"You don't need a vote to raise hell! You need convictions and a voice!"

MOTHER JONES



WOMEN'S WORK THROUGHOUT HISTORY



Wikimedia Commons

MIDDLE-CLASS MORALITY

Another popular women's activism cause in the early 1900s was the temperance movement, which advocated for the banning of alcohol and was often associated with religious organizations and suffragettes. Temperance was tied up with middle-class and Anglo notions of propriety and morality (that said, in the Keweenaw, many upwardly mobile Finns were involved with temperance societies and suffrage organizing). These middle-class activists disparaged working-class women for taking on boarders in their homes for two main reasons: 1) running a boarding house led to overworked and therefore neglectful mothers and 2) boarding

houses resulted in the loss of privacy for the family and exposed children to potentially "inappropriate" men. These middle-class reformers also accused striking women as being "too busy" with the strike to care for their children and husbands. These working-class mothers responded by bringing their children to picket lines and to court to prove their dedication to family (a tactic also employed by the striking textile workers in Lawrence, MA in 1912).



Wikimedia Commons

Women's suffragettes: Elisabeth Freeman, Marion Craig Wentworth, and Elsie McKenzie

**"If we win [the strike] much of the credit will belong
to our wives...**

**[They] are the heart and soul in the cause.
They urged us to strike and they're urging
us not to give in."**

CALUMET NEWS, 1 AUGUST 1913



NPS, Keweenaw NHP, KHP, Tanssalista-Helvettiin cover, 1916

This Finnish temperance pamphlet translates as "from the dance hall to Hell."

DISCUSSION

As the women activists of the early 20th-century show, there is no one way to be a feminist. In what ways do culture and class influence what it means to be "a feminist" today?

Settling in Keweenaw. One woman's story.



NPS, Keweenaw NHP, Curto Album 4, #041 Maggie Walz and other Finnish women, Nara, ca. 1910 recto

Maggie Walz and other Finnish women



NPS, Keweenaw NHP, Nuunen, Maggie Walz, Ylipäänsä, University graduation portrait, 1934

Born in Finland in 1861, Maggie Walz immigrated to the Copper Country when she was 20 years old. When she first arrived, Walz worked as a housekeeper, and soon after took another job selling sewing machines and pianos door-to-door.

A natural salesperson, Walz sharpened her skills at business school and went on to run two nationally distributed Finnish newspapers and fight for women's suffrage. Despite her success in the United States, Walz never forgot her immigrant roots: throughout her life, she helped young Finnish women immigrate to and settle in the US, bringing them over, teaching them English, and finding them jobs.

MICHIGAN'S HISTORY OF ORGANIZED LABOR



The only effective answer to organized greed is organized labor.” Thomas Donahue



Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University



Don't go to Calumet or Hancock Mich. where all miners are on strike.

DEATH THREAT

Anonymous note to Mr. MacNaughton at time of strike. “Mr. MacNaughton - your day has come - you are running 50,000 persons but I only will run you - Dye you MUST today, tomorrow or next year. This [picture of a knife] is your death. [signed a Christian.]



Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Calumet and Hecla Mining Companies Collection



One man drill

Some of the most violent conflicts of the early 20th century occurred in the mining industry, such as the 1914 Colorado coal miners strike. During this strike, the National Guard fired machine guns directly into a striker's tent colony killing 21 people, including miners' wives and children.

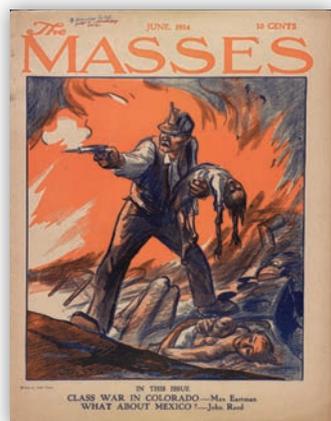


Illustration of a striking Colorado coal mine worker fires a gun after his wife and children were killed during the Ludlow Massacre. Sloan, John, 1871-1951, artist

UNIONS, PAST AND PRESENT

As corporations rapidly grew in the 20th century, the workplace became increasingly impersonal and workers turned to unions and strikes more frequently. Miners in the Keweenaw were not the only local workers unionizing: the area was home to unions for barbers, cigar makers, painters, streetcar workers, and more.

In front of the Union Headquarters in Calumet Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Quincy Mining Company

In 1913, the Keweenaw copper miners union went on strike for wages, better hours, a system for airing grievances, and the rejection of the one-man drill. Contrary to popular belief, the strikers were not skeptical of the safety of this new tool. Rather, they protested the tool cutting the labor force in half and the safety of having a partner underground. But, perhaps most importantly, workers went on strike to have their union recognized by management.

While C&H did shorten the workday and institute a formal grievance procedure, they never recognized the WFM union.

Today, “Right to Work” laws have been enacted in 27 states, including Michigan. Right to Work laws force unions to represent employees who refuse to join the union and pay dues during contract negotiations. Such laws effectively bankrupt unions, which rely on membership dues to finance contract negotiations with employers.

LABOR & MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

Corporate paternalism was a popular form of management at the turn of the century. In this system, companies took on a “fatherly” role, claiming to provide for the physical and moral health of their workers with various amenities, as mentioned earlier. These amenities, however, came at a cost: companies censored books, evicted tenants, and generally expected compliance and deference from workers. For example, at the C&H library, a librarian wanted to provide a book on woodworking, as many miners enjoyed the craft as a hobby. But, because the book discussed workplace safety, C&H managers had it pulled from the shelves, lest miners get any ideas about workplace safety.

DISCUSSION

While it seems that the days of corporate paternalism are gone, vestiges of it remain in American workplaces today. One major example is employer based health insurance—without a single payer system, workers often rely on jobs for healthcare. What are other examples of corporate paternalism and employer overreach that happen today?



MICHIGAN'S HISTORY OF ORGANIZED LABOR



Library of Congress

Strike Sympathizers

STRIKE TACTICS

Picketing in public spaces is a key tactic for striking workers, and for the men and women on strike in 1913 it was no different. Every morning as the sun came up, hundreds of strikers—men, women, and children—would form picket lines that scabs would have to cross if they wanted to get to work. Unionized workers, regardless of industry, do not cross picket lines under any circumstances. In other words, if a unionized painter had to paint a house behind the striking miner's picket line, he would not go to work either. Picketing and marching through the streets of the Copper Country functioned as a reminder to the public that these towns existed because of the miners and their families' tireless labor. Through making themselves seen and heard, strikers reminded elites and non-unionists that the Copper Country was theirs, too.

HIRING SCABS:

"Scabs" are people who go to work despite an ongoing strike. The scabs brought

in by the Copper Country companies actually tended to come from factory jobs rather than other mines (though this isn't to say that there weren't scabs brought in from other mining regions).

BRINGING IN THE NATIONAL GUARD

At the end of the 19th century, the National Guard was used increasingly for "peacekeeping" during strikes. More often than not, they escalated tensions and fell on the side of corporations.



Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Calumet and Hecla Photograph Collection

National Guard in Calumet

Italian Hall Disaster



Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, MTU Overseas Collection—Labor Strikes—Drawer 15A

Knowing Christmas would be difficult for families during the strike, Big Annie and the WFM Women's Auxiliary organized a Christmas party with games, carols, and gift bags for the children of strikers. It was a multi-ethnic event, with about 500 children and 175 parents (all union members) in attendance.

In the middle of the party, tragedy struck. Somebody yelled "Fire!" and panicked guests began to run towards the steep staircase to the exit. As panicked guests tried to exit, people tripped over each other and bodies began to pile up on the stairs. The Italian Hall Disaster took 74 lives, 60 of them children. The cause of death

was suffocation, but there was no fire.

To this day, nobody knows who yelled "Fire!" or if it was an accident or malicious. Some unionists claimed

a man wearing a Citizens Alliance button was the perpetrator, but other witnesses said they saw no such thing. The entire community was left mourning.

In 1984, the Italian Hall was torn down and a monument to the lives lost was erected. The tearing down of the building sparked a conversation about preservation with

the residents of Calumet, galvanizing the push to establish the Keweenaw National Historical Park in 1992.



Photo by: Courtesy of Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Nora Photograph Collection



"The four greatest words in the annals of New England are: Lexington and Concord, and Calumet and Hecla. The first two made New England history and the last two made New England fortunes."

FREDERICK L. COLLINS



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