MICHIGAN'S KEWEENAW PENINSULA

America's Mini Melting Pot

Ellis Island is the point of entry where millions of immigrants jumped into the melting pot that became modern-day America. But did you know that the Copper Country was once an interior Ellis Island? At one time over 38 ethnic groups lived together in the Keweenaw. People have lived here for 7,000 years, but it was the copper rush of the 1840s that attracted immigrants from all over the world and shaped the Copper Country into what it is today.

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keweenaw.org
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COPPER HARBOR IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION
copperharbor.org
906.289.4274

KEWEENAW CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU
keweenaw.info
906.337.4579

KEWEENAW NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
nps.gov/kewe
906.483.3176

COPPER COUNTRY TRAIL NATIONAL BYWAY

People & Ethnic Groups of the Keweenaw

Photo Courtesy Michigan Tech Archives

CONTINUE EXPLORING AT
coppercountrytrail.org

A
Tamarack Miners. Photo Courtesy of NPS/ Keweenaw NHP Archives

B
Chinese Laundry Men. Photo Courtesy of Michigan Tech Archives

C
Finnish Hunter and his dog. Photo Courtesy of Michigan Tech Archives

THE FIRST IMMIGRANTS

Archaeologists have found evidence of prehistoric peoples in the area dating back 7,000 years. They mined and traded copper in the area prior to the arrival of the Anishinaabeg. The Anishinaabeg harvested and celebrated resources that the area provided, like fish, game, and copper. By the middle of the 19th century much of the Anishinaabeg land was ceded to the United States, but as some of the Copper Country's first immigrants, their impact on the area is undeniable.

AN INTERIOR ELLIS ISLAND

The copper mining rush began in the 1840s and continued until the 1920s. As the Copper Country rose to international fame during this time immigrants poured in from all over the world. Ethnic groups included Cornish, Italian, Finnish, German, French Canadian, Irish and many more. The decline of copper mining caused an out-migration, but the traces of America's interior Ellis Island can still be seen today.

Source: An Interior Ellis Island. MTU Archives & Copper Country Historical Collections, 2007. http://ethnicity.lib.mtu.edu

UNCOVER YOUR ROOTS

There are many branches that make up a family tree. Do any of yours extend into the Copper Country? Contact or visit the following sites to discover your connection:

- MTU Archived & Copper Country Historical Collections
- Keweenaw National Historical Park Archives
- Finlandia University's Finnish American Historical Archive
- Houghton County Historical Museum
- Keweenaw County Historical Society
- Houghton-Keweenaw County Genealogical Society