

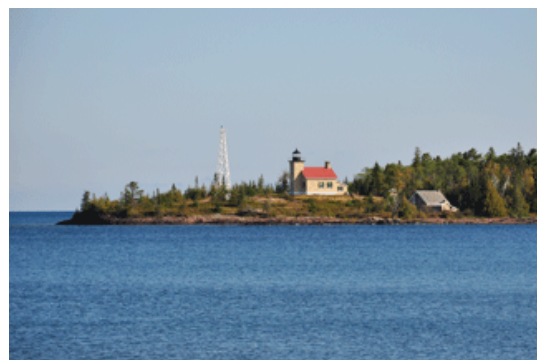
Keweenaw Peninsula



The Keweenaw is Michigan's Top of the World! Here is where the largest fresh waters on earth create a peninsula called the Keweenaw. This is where adventure falls from the sky, grows from the ground and springs from Lake Superior. The Keweenaw is a great place to visit on your snowmobiles in winter, or for a leisurely summer drive.

Copper Harbor:

The village of Copper Harbor, Michigan's northernmost community, offers the visitor an opportunity to visit a truly unique Upper Peninsula community. The discovery of huge pure copper deposits in 1843 produced the need for a government land office. In 1844, the first contingent of U.S. Army troops arrived to begin construction of Fort Wilkins to maintain law and order in the settlement of mineral prospectors. Some of the early miners stayed on to settle the area and became the ancestors of many of the current townfolk and shop owners. The port of Copper Harbor became one of the main shipping points for copper going out and supplies coming in. The original Copper Harbor Lighthouse was built in 1849, the present one in 1867. Much of what was built then is still there for you to see today.



Keweenaw Ghost Towns:

If you are fascinated by the aura of the past, the Keweenaw Peninsula is the place for you. Wander among ruins of old mines and locations that used to be teeming with excitement. In the late 1800's and early 1900's the Keweenaw Peninsula was alive with the sounds of the copper mines. The miners' picks are quiet now, the families are gone, and all that is left is the sound of the wind rustling through the ruins of these abandoned mines and buildings. DO NOT ENTER THE BUILDINGS OR RUINS.

CENTRAL MINE

At one time Central Mine, opened in 1854, was a top copper producer. It was located in an ancient mining pit along an outcrop below a Greenstone Bluff.

The remains of this town are located on the west side of highway 41 just 4 miles north of Phoenix. Cornish miners and their families flocked from Britain and with their extensive mining knowledge they helped make this a successful venture. There are several buildings still standing, most of them occupied by summer residents. You can still see some of the old mine buildings and rock piles as you drive through the village. The old Methodist Episcopal Church, erected in 1868, has been recently restored.



CLIFF

A lively village grew up around the fabulous Cliff Mine, established in 1844 by John Hayes, a pharmacist from Pittsburgh, PA. It was the first profitable mine in the Keweenaw. At its peak, 840 men were employed. Great copper masses were found regularly at the Cliff Mine. Many were so immense (50-100 tons) they required days of cutting before they could be divided into sections small enough to transport to the dock at Eagle River. The Cliff produced over 40 million pounds of copper. The village was clustered around the mine at the base of the cliff where a cemetery still exists across the west branch of the Eagle River. Later the village moved across the road where the Keweenaw Central Railroad established a station. Beyond the tracks is the old German Cemetery. The Cliff Mine closed in 1873. Unfortunately, little remains except some old foundations and rock piles. The Cliff is located just left of highway 41 north of Mohawk.

GAY

Just a few miles east of Kersearge on the east shore of the Keweenaw Peninsula in the village of Gay. The Mohawk Mining Company built its stamp mill here in 1898. Gay is located at the water's edge because water was needed for the flotation method of separating copper from ore and the large lake offered ideal dumping ground for the tons of residual stamp sand. By 1932 the stamp sand went out a mile past the original shore. Gay was named for Joseph E. Gay, one of the founders of the Mohawk and Wolverine Mining Companies. The 265' Gay smokestack still stands and serves as a landmark for boaters. There are still some summer residents here and a few hardy souls who stay all winter. There are no stores or gas stations, so plan accordingly.

MANDAN

If you are interested in seeing a realistic ghost town, your trip is not complete without a drive through Mandan. About four miles north of Delaware on highway 41, is a post on the right that reads Mandan. Turn east and follow the little dirt road for a few feet and you will see the old buildings left from a once thriving mining town.

Your first glimpse is the old house at the top of a small hill, the remains of one of the "double" houses that were built at that time. Turn right on the dirt road and go around the foundation of what was probably the old general store on your right and you are on the Main Street of Mandan. If you keep going down Main Street and turn to the right you will be back on highway 41.

This was the site of the Mandan Mining Company (1863) and was home at one time to about 300 people. At this time, there are three or four houses left that are apparently used by summer residents, and you can see many old foundations and the remains of some unfortunate houses that have collapsed. At one time there were 10 houses in double rows on each side of Main Street.

The school, built in 1907, was on a little hill and faced the woods but all that remains is the foundation. In the early 1900's the town was at the end of the line for the railroad and had a railroad depot. Some say the town was named for a local Indian tribe that used red dye for decorations and mandan is a Welsh word for red dye, while others say it was named for "that man Dan", Daniel Spencer, a Scottish-Irish miner from Canada.

PHOENIX

Phoenix is located on highway 41 at the junction of M-26 to Eagle River. Once (about 1872) a thriving mining town of around 500 to 1000 people, but today there are only a

few old buildings and the Phoenix Church remaining at the site of the old mine. St. Mary's Church was built in 1858 to serve the Catholic residents of the mining community of Cliff, the scene of the area's first major copper discovery in 1844. In 1899 the church was dismantled and reassembled in Phoenix, where it was renamed the Church of the Assumption. The Keweenaw County Historical Society has purchased and restored the property so the Phoenix Church appears much as it did over 100 years ago.

Snowmobiling the Keweenaw:

Snowmobilers can receive a 99.9% guarantee that they will find plenty of snow in the Keweenaw Peninsula every year between the months of December and April. Lake Superior is responsible for most of the snow, blanketing this region with 16 to 20 feet of snow annually. The Keweenaw Peninsula is surrounded on three sides by Lake Superior. More than 200 miles of perfectly maintained trails link riders with over 2,500 miles of trails throughout the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Many riders reach this area via the Bill Nicholls Trail, an abandoned railroad grade that serves as a super highway to the Keweenaw Peninsula. The Bill Nichols trail starts at Adventure Mountain near Ontonagon. The Freda Trail loop connects with the Bill Nichols trail just north of Toivola and offers riders a fun-filled trek to view Lake Superior and join back up with the trail near South Range.

Traveling north from Hancock, the Stevens and Keweenaw Trails join together in the Calumet and Laurium areas providing an excellent start to exploring beautiful "Copper Country". Scenic day trips from this area to Gay and Dreamland are highly recommended.

Once riders have made it this far, they are almost always overcome by the urge to make it all the way to the tip of the Keweenaw Peninsula where the Clark Mine Trail and Mandan Trail lead to a spectacular view of High Rock Bay. Located near the tip of the Keweenaw is the cozy little town of Copper Harbor which welcomes snowmobilers to enjoy the peace and serenity of this scenic area. A trip on the Brockway Mountain Trail will make you feel as if you are riding on top of the world. The panoramic view from the top lets riders overlook Copper Harbor and Lake Superior.