

**PATHWAYS TO THE PAST: HISTORICAL NARRATIVE AND INTERPRETIVE PLAN  
FOR THE PAAVOLA WETLANDS PRESERVE AND BOSTON POND**

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June 2014

This document is submitted in partial fulfillment of grant SB-2011-MI-56748 “Facilities Enhancements, Universal Access and Historic Interpretation at Nature Preserves along Copper Country Trail” funded by the National Scenic Byways Program and administered by the Michigan Department of Transportation as contract #2012-0452.

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## **PART 1: Paavola and Boston Pond Preserves – Historical Narrative**

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to describe the recent cultural histories of two geographically and historically connected landscapes, the Paavola Wetland Preserve and Boston Pond properties, owned by the Keweenaw Land Trust.<sup>1</sup> The KLT acquires properties throughout the Copper Country region in order to preserve and protect these places for public enjoyment. To further their mission, the KLT was awarded a grant from the Department of Transportation's America's Scenic Byways program for the development of walking trails on the Paavola Wetland Preserve and Boston Pond sites.<sup>2</sup> These trails will include interpretive signs based on the historical information contained in this document. This historical narrative is based on research conducted at local and regional archives, primary documents contained in those archives, multiple site visits, measured drawings of the farmstead remains crafted by the author and her colleagues, and oral histories of current and former residents of the Paavola community.<sup>3</sup>

The KLT preserves are located in Houghton County along US Highway 41 north of Hancock, Michigan, as part of Franklin Township. The legal description of the Paavola Wetland Preserve is T55N R33W Section 18 SE corner with nearby Paavola subdivision at T55N R33W Section 19 Northern ½. The portion of the shore of Boston Lake (Pond) owned by the KLT is located along T55N R33W Sections 8 and 17.<sup>4</sup> The Preserves are placed atop a section of the Keweenaw fault, on top of what is referred to in this report as the middle lode. This area is located between two major deposits of native copper: 1) the Calumet & Hecla conglomerate to the north and 2) the Quincy mine to the south. The native copper was deposited in solution among the region's amygdaloid rocks, irregularly along the northeast to southwest trending spine of the Keweenaw Peninsula. Unfortunately for those mines established on top of what would become the KLT preserves, this

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1 This report was supported by grant SB-2011-MI-56748 "Facilities Enhancements, Universal Access and Historic Interpretation at Nature Preserves along Copper Country Trail" funded by the National Scenic Byways Program and administered by the Michigan Department of Transportation. This project was approved by the IRB at Michigan Technological University for human subjects impacts (interviews).

2 The Copper Country Byway, the Scenic Byway designated portion of US 41 that runs from Hancock to Copper Harbor, divides the Boston Pond area from its southern neighbor, the Paavola Wetlands Preserve.

3 Archives: Michigan Technological University Archives & Copper Country Historical Collections, Finnish American Heritage Center Archives, Marquette Regional History Center J.M Longyear Research Library, Houghton County Agricultural Extension Service private archive, Michigan State Historical Archive. Measured drawings drafted by Sarah Fayen Scarlett and Talva Dick-Jacobson.

4 "Map of Quincy Property and Vicinity" ca. 1910, Map Folder 5K, MTUA&CCHC; Plat Book of Houghton County Michigan 1911; Atlas and Plat Book, Houghton County 1974; Land Atlas and Plat Book: the Keweenaw – Houghton and Keweenaw Counties 2006; Deed Register, Houghton County Courthouse.

middle lode area was not nearly as rich with copper as the deposits immediately to the north and south.<sup>5</sup>

In the first half of the 1800s, prior to the beginning of mining in the area, the General Land Office conducted landscape surveys of the area.<sup>6</sup> The surveyors described the vegetation in Sections 8, 17, 18, and 19 as primarily mixed hardwoods such as yellow birch, maple, cedar, and low quality hemlock, with some conifers, such as white pine and fir, mixed in occasionally. The sandy loam soil was broken by streams flowing into a ravine. This water flow was later harnessed by miners and farmers in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## INDIGENOUS

While the indigenous period of occupation and copper mining in this area is not part of the period of study for this report, the landscape's story would be incomplete without acknowledging the presence of people before the time of European immigration and Euro-American copper mining. Indigenous peoples engaged in copper extraction along with exploiting many of the other resources of the area; the remains of these copper extraction efforts later provided clues that guided the beginnings of industrial copper in this area. More recent indigenous people, the Anishinaabe, focused on other resources besides copper such as tree bark, wild rice harvesting, and aquatic and terrestrial wildlife.<sup>7</sup> In her study of the beaver of the Paavola Wetland Preserve, Root found that the Anishinaabe recognize beaver as being among their own family members.<sup>8</sup>

The key themes emerging from the stories of these sites are those of shifting local economic efforts from mining to agriculture and the nearby community responses to those shifts. Permanent Euro-American settlement began in the area as a result of copper mining efforts on the middle lode between the Calumet & Hecla Mining Company (C&H) to the north and the Quincy Mining Company (QMC) to the south. The community of Boston began as the mining location for the Albany & Boston Mining Company (Albany & Boston) but soon embraced agriculture as well, eventually becoming well known for potatoes. Paavola was a distinctive immigrant Finnish community that, from its earliest days, remained less attached to a specific mining company.

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<sup>5</sup> Mineralogical Society of America. 1997. Virtual field trip to the Keweenaw Peninsula of Michigan. [http://www.minsocam.org/msa/collectors\\_corner/vft/mi1.htm](http://www.minsocam.org/msa/collectors_corner/vft/mi1.htm).

<sup>6</sup> General Land Office notes, Michigan State Historical Archives.

<sup>7</sup> Martin 1999 *Wonderful Power*.

<sup>8</sup> Root 2012. "the Anishinaabe informants I spoke with perceived the land as their home with the beaver as family members, even as perhaps ancient elders – dwelling in the graveyard of the Anishinaabe people."

## MINING

Copper mining in the vicinity of Boston and Paavola was characterized by a progression of mid-sized and smaller mining enterprises, each speculating on the middle lode, hoping that they would be competitive with their neighbors at the north and south ends of the Pewabic lode and Allouez conglomerate. However, none of these properties quite matched the volume and success of QMC or C&H.

### Early Surface Development

The earliest mining exploration near Boston began with the Albany & Boston Mining Company (A&B) in 1860-61.<sup>9</sup> Their first efforts in June 1860 focused on probing/testing what they optimistically called the Albany & Boston lode; they also worked the Pewabic lode to a lesser extent. The A&B lode later came to be called the Allouez conglomerate. In the early 1860s, Albany & Boston owned 1200 acres of mineral land, as well as timberland and lakeshore along Portage Lake. In addition to the earliest testing of potential mineral resources the company put considerable energy, time, and resources into establishing the key surface resources needed for a successfully functioning mine. The company also built a road to nearby Pontiac Mine as well as log houses for their first workers. Their early efforts to prepare the land for mining included clearing the land of trees and underbrush, road building, and construction of carpenter and blacksmith shops. In 1861 Albany & Boston established additional surface improvements with expectations that the Allouez conglomerate would show a profit. They cleared five more acres of land, erected an office, and established the core of the support structures for the mine including a powder house, a changing house for the workers, an engine house, a saw mill, a coal shop, a frame barn, and a frame tool house.<sup>10</sup> In these early years the Albany & Boston Mining Company created the elements of what would later be known as a “mining location” through the copper district—represented by a store with a full cellar, an agent’s house, and seven log houses, finished with plaster, for the workers.

At this early point in its history, the supervisors of the Albany & Boston Mining Company also began to think about how best to supply water to their processing equipment. They estimated that a stream flowing through the southern portion of their property would supply enough water to stamp and wash as much as 100 tons of rock each day, expecting that the flow would be even greater during part of the year. They planned exploit this seasonal surplus of water by creating a reservoir “by means of a dam at no great cost” that could hold as much as five million cubic feet of water.<sup>11</sup>

### Relative Success of Albany & Boston and Franklin Jr.

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<sup>9</sup> Mining Company Abstracts, Albany & Boston Mining Company 1860-1882, MTUA&CCHC.

<sup>10</sup> Stevens *The Copper Handbook* 1900.

<sup>11</sup> Albany & Boston Mining Co., Report of the Directors of the Albany & Boston Mining Co. to the Stockholders 1861.

Compared to some other small mines in the area, and despite the fact that it had a limited production life, the Albany and Boston Mining Company was relatively successful. Even though the mine had diminished yields in 1863, it imported Swedish workers the following year, possibly as a replacement for workers lost to fighting in the Civil War. Surface improvements in that era included erection of a shaft house and renovation of the changing house so that it was now a stone structure with a steel roof, implying that this was for the benefit of worker morale.<sup>12</sup>

In the mid-1860s the Albany & Boston Mining Company expanded their community to 33 homes and a boarding house, demonstrating their continued success. The store added a warehouse. Both structures were owned by Albany & Boston and then leased to Hoar Brothers merchants who took responsibility for their operation. At this time Boston Creek had not yet been dammed. There were studies done to explore alternatives; at the time, the preferred alternative to developing what would come to be called Boston Pond (or Boston Lake) was to transport the rock down to the shore of Portage Lake where the Albany & Boston also owned land. A map of their surface improvements at the time shows the mining location as having eight platted streets and marks the location of the school house and the saw mill. In the span of almost ten years, Albany and Boston had become the most successful mine and well developed mine location of the middle lode. However, in 1869 profits had diminished so they turned over mining efforts to tribute miners who worked the lode until 1881.

In 1894 the former Albany & Boston property was sold to the Franklin Mining Company and renamed the Franklin Jr.<sup>13</sup> The Franklin Jr. Mining Company utilized both the Allouez conglomerate and the Pewabic lode, but separate production was not necessarily reported between the two deposits.<sup>14</sup> Their turn of the century yield was the greatest return of any “producing mine in the district with the possible exception of the Arcadian” but that may be because published reports of the Arcadian’s yield were not available at the time. In 1900 Franklin Jr. planned to open a “very large” mine to fully exploit the Allouez conglomerate. The yield of the Pewabic lode had proved to be unsatisfactory and so the former workings of the Albany & Boston Mining Company on the Allouez were reopened.<sup>15</sup>

By 1909 there were serious concerns reported on the yields of the Franklin Jr. At that time the yields were so poor in grade on both lodes that it was feared that the only profitable move would be to expand production to a “very large” scale “upon a most economical basis...”; i.e., as

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<sup>12</sup> Albany & Boston Mining Co., Report of the Directors of the Albany & Boston Mining Co. to the Stockholders 1864 , 1865.

<sup>13</sup> Butler and Burbank 1929 *The Copper Deposits of Michigan* Vol. 1 & 2 Professional Paper 144 Department of the Interior USGS; *DMG* Feb. 14, 1981.

<sup>14</sup> Stevens *The Copper Handbook* 1903.

<sup>15</sup> *DMG* Apr. 8, 1993.

cheaply as possible. After the work on the Allouez conglomerate was closed in 1909 production shifted exclusively to the Pewabic lode, which yielded approximately 16 million pounds of copper at 9-12 pounds of copper per ton of rock extracted from their four shafts. As was the case for all mining in that period, when profits dipped too low work at Franklin Jr. stopped between 1920 and 1926.

#### Relative Failure of the Peninsula Mining Company and the Arcadian Mining Company

In between its working by the Albany & Boston Mining Company and Franklin Jr., the middle lode property was sold in 1881 to the Peninsula Mining Company and work began that next year. An 1889 account in the *Portage Lake Mining Gazette* noted that prior to that year the Peninsula Mining Company's nearly \$1 million investment yielded only 1500 tons of rock. In the previous year a scathing editorial piece appeared in the *Ontonagon Herald* criticizing mines – particularly Peninsula – that failed due to overinvestment and poor management. The author wrote “If the owners of valuable properties would exercise a little judicious judgement [sic] and appoint skilled and tried men with a practical turn of mind, to lay out, develop [sic] and operate their properties, the copper district would not be marked by so many abandoned mines with fine shaft-houses, engine-houses and other good buildings going to waste and decay.”<sup>16</sup> Mining was concluded by the Peninsula Mining Company in 1892.<sup>17</sup>

The Arcadian Mining Company was another unfortunate failure on the middle lode; perhaps they did not heed the advice given by local interests such as *The Ontonagon Herald*. This property, originally known as the Concord Mining Company was sold off by the Franklin Mining Company in 1864. In the late 1860s- early 1870s there was a proliferation of small mining groups in the area that would later become Standard Oil Company's Arcadian Mine. West of what would become the Paavola Wetlands, the St. Mary's Mineral Land Company owned 320 acres between 1867 and 1872. In section 19 there were more complex shifts in mining property ownership, with Highland Copper Company owning 80 acres in 1867 and 1870 and Concord Mining Company owning 160 acres in 1870 and 1872.<sup>18</sup> In that same period the first incarnation of the Arcadian Mining Company owned 160 acres in section 20, also just west of what would become the town of Paavola. Exploratory work began at Arcadian in 1864.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Ontonagon Herald*, Apr. 21, 1888. “The Peninsula Mine.”

<sup>17</sup> Mining Company Abstracts, Peninsula Mining Company, MS-048 Fldr 9 MTUA&CCHC; *Torch Lake Times* Apr. 21, 1889; Romig 1986 *Michigan Place Names*.

<sup>18</sup> Township Assessment Records: Franklin Township 1870, 1872, MTUA&CCHC; *DMG* Jun. 21, 1980.

<sup>19</sup> C&H Abstracts (Arcadian Mining Co.) MS-048 Box 1 Fldr 31, Fldr 32 MTUA&CCHC; *DMG* Jun. 24, 1978; *The Copper Handbook* 1900, 1902, 1903.



Popular lore has suggested that at some time before the beginning of the Arcadian mine, “a couple of Finnish farmers” attempted to sink a well on the Ripley plateau, hit a boulder, and abandoned their well; they did not realize that they had come down upon the amygdaloid vein.<sup>20</sup> In the late 1890s, the Arcadian Mining Company reorganized under the laws of New Jersey, which may have had more favorable laws for investors than the laws of Michigan, at \$3.5 million capitalization.

Their total holdings at this point included approximately 3200 acres made up of five defunct mines.<sup>21</sup> In 1900, Arcadian had total assets of \$1.8 million. The old Arcadian of the 1860s-70s had become the “nucleus” of the new “amplified” Arcadian Mining Company which included several adjoining properties: Arcadian, Edwards, Douglass, Concord, Highland, and St. Mary’s mining companies. The first four of these were incorporated together in 1898. These holdings were said to be the most “extensive” of any of the mining outfits in the Copper Country.

Several Standard Oil magnates made a heavy investment in the Arcadian mine, building it on a scale similar to the largest three or four mining operations in the region. Early work at the mine included six shafts and drifts at every level of excavation, comparable only to the workings of C&H. The investors erected shaft houses of steel and engine houses of stone.<sup>22</sup> Stevens describes the landscape changes there as “...where cows had pastured around half a dozen decaying dwellings one year before [1899], a town sprang up, as if by magic, with two parallel streets each a mile in length.”

At its height the Arcadian Mining Company employed 1100 men in varying mining occupations and 500 more contractors and subcontractors to construct the elements of its surface and underground built environment. The mine was said to be equipped as one of the best in the world. As many as seven shafts were open at the turn of the century. Their surface workings were also of top quality, with “ample accommodations” for the mine officers and their clerical staff. Arcadian took its water supply from the “old Boston Dam which once furnished water for the mill of the Albany & Boston mine.” The Mineral Range Railroad served both the Arcadian and the Franklin Jr. as of 1899.<sup>23</sup>

Community development there included a “modern” schoolhouse built for \$6,000 and an independently run general store. The mine’s location included quality homes for the mine’s bosses and 150 dwellings for the mine workers, “nearly all of which are new and of 6 rooms each. The

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<sup>20</sup> *DMG* Jul. 19, 1905.

<sup>21</sup> *The Copper Handbook* 1900-1911.

<sup>22</sup> C&H Abstracts (Arcadian Mining Co.) MS-048 Box 1 Fldr 32 MTUA&CCHC.

<sup>23</sup> *Polk Directory* 1899-1990; *The Copper Handbook* 1900.

better among the old dwellings of the various locations have been remodeled and the others torn down".<sup>24</sup>

As of 1900, the returns on Standard Oil's investment were disappointing because they were unable to run their 3 stamp mill at Grosse Point to maximum capacity. It became clear at this point that Arcadian's management overinvested in the mine and overestimated its possibilities. Low yields as of 1903 led the company to divest itself of some of its capital investments. They sold some of their hoist machinery and shaft houses to the Trimountain Mining Company and their stamp mill to the Centennial mine; as a result their property was "almost completely dismantled." Exploratory work resumed between 1905 and 1908 but then suspended again in March of that year. The management had hoped that a new diamond drill would improve their chances for a good return. During that period Arcadian sold 800 acres of their property to the QMC to alleviate approximately \$700 thousand in debt, though the source of that debt is unclear.<sup>25</sup>

## **AGRICULTURE**

Agricultural production was present in the Keweenaw from the beginning of commercial copper mining in the area as an important component of the local economy.<sup>26</sup> Local farming supported the needs of the miners and their families. In the later part of the 1800s small scale subsistence farming became more common, especially after immigrants from Finland began arriving.<sup>27</sup> By the time that Boston and Paavola become recognized communities some of the farms in the area had become independent commercial ventures growing for export out of the Copper Country.

In terms of the local growing conditions, the Houghton County Extension Service observed in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the growing season in Houghton is comparable to that of Pontiac, Michigan, located in the east central part of the state, at an average of 151 days. The growing season in Calumet tends to average 6 days fewer and the farming areas within 3 miles of the village, nearer the lakeshore, tended to have even longer growing seasons than Houghton.

In 1917 Leo Geisner, the Agricultural Extension agent of the time, wrote that farming began in the Keweenaw soon after industrial copper mining, with the Cliff Mine beginning the first farm in the area ca. 1842. In 1846 the Suffolk Mine, near Copper City north of Calumet, also had an

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<sup>24</sup>        *ibid.* 1900.

<sup>25</sup>        New Arcadian Copper Company, Annual Report (1910-1916); New Baltic Copper Company report 1916; Arcadian Consolidated Mining Company report 1920-1924; *DMG* Aug. 21, 1976.

<sup>26</sup>        Presley 2013 b, c.

<sup>27</sup>        Whitaker 1926.

“extensive” farm. Farming in the Copper Country increased alongside the increase in the area’s mining production. For example, the 1864 Michigan State Census noted only one farmer in Franklin Township, which includes both Paavola and Boston location. But by 1874 the state census recorded the production of 2775 bushels of potatoes and 250 tons of hay there. The 1874 census also listed a wide range of livestock found in Franklin Township; sheep, swine, cattle, horses, mules, and oxen.<sup>28</sup>

After the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the number of farms in Houghton County continued to increase until it had the second highest number of farms in the Upper Peninsula.<sup>29</sup> This increase paralleled that of the population increase in the area. Geisner suggested that farming was a good economic back-up for miners in the Copper Country, especially in times of “industrial depression” when the price of copper was low. Agriculture boosterism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century claimed that the conditions in the Keweenaw featured hills covered in “rich herbiage,” high land value, some of the world’s “finest” markets, and “the best paid working people in the world.”<sup>30</sup> Further boosterism, likely overstating things, suggested that the Copper Country would be a profitable place for raising sheep in the cutover land.<sup>31</sup>

Potato growing began to be an important farming effort at that time, thanks in part to the Farm Bureau’s work toward standardizing the crop. The first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw an overall increase in production of all crops grown at a commercial scale – over 200 acres planted. In that period the number of dairy cows and hogs in Houghton County increased by over a third.

Potatoes became a significant commercial crop in the Copper Country in the interwar and postwar periods, peaking especially in the 1940s. Commercial agriculture in earlier periods emphasized growing hay for animal power; utilizing animal power in the process.<sup>32</sup> Commercial strawberry production also emerged in the interwar and postwar periods but was much more successful south of Houghton.

The state's agriculture extension service helped to further scientific farming practices in the Keweenaw. This included fossil fuel powered semi-mechanized agricultural implements for potato production. These steps are well documented in photographs from the period (See Interpretive Plan, Appendix C). Potato cultivation at that time mixed human and mechanized steps where both men and women participated. First, seed potatoes were prepped by a mix of humans and machines. Planting in prepared fields was usually done by machine, but in some cases had to be

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<sup>28</sup> 1874 Michigan State Census.

<sup>29</sup> Geisner ca. 1920 *The Upper Peninsula of Michigan “Cloverland.”*

<sup>30</sup> Houghton Agricultural Society, ca. 1903.

<sup>31</sup> *American Sheep Breeder* Apr 1903 “The Upper Peninsula of Michigan for Sheep and Goats.”

<sup>32</sup> Sweitz\* 2010, 2011; Presley 2013a, b, c.

done by hand. Harvesting at the end of the season was mechanized. Some of the Copper Country's growers participated in competitions sponsored by the local potato growers association and in festivals similar to today's strawberry festival to the south in Chassell.

Potato growing, especially in the Boston area, left its marks on the local landscape. The most noticeable of these are the potato storage barns. These storage barns integrated or directly linked together two types of transportation – trucks and rail lines. Farmers in the surrounding area would haul truckloads of loose potatoes to the storage barns, drive up their attached earthen ramps, and load the potatoes into floor to ceiling storage bins. These bins would then be unloaded into railcars waiting on the rail that ran alongside the barn. Some of these barns still remain on the landscape. One located near Boston Pond on Boston Road was made in part from repurposed lumber taken from the demolition of nearby Electric Park, thus symbolizing a shift in land use from the leisure of the industrializing community of Boston to the emphasis on agriculture in its later years. The result is an iconic symbol of postwar agriculture in the region.

#### Census Data and Farming Households

By 1920, Paavola was well established as a small farming community. The Federal census from that year listed 14 farm households in Paavola, an increase over the nine farming households listed in the 1916-17 Polk Directory. Only one of these farms was owned by a woman, though her son is listed as the farmer of record. Not surprisingly, two-thirds of Paavola's farming households were headed by men with Finnish surnames. All but one of the farmsteads belonged to married couples, most of which had multiple children. One-third of these heads of farm households also worked as copper miners. All but two of the farmsteads were owned free and clear.<sup>33</sup> Between 1933 and 1945, the amount of land under cultivation in the area continued to increase. More lands were being cleared in part because relatively small parcels could not accommodate the modernized agricultural equipment of the period. There was also a parallel increase in employment as small farm owners returned after the war. The Copper Country Committee for Economic Development in 1945 observed that “[f]armers now look to their farms for their entire support and must continue to do so.” In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century just under 25% of the total land area in Houghton County was designated by the Cooperative Extension Service as farm land. Prior to the 1940s the majority of farms in the county were owned and operated by their original settlers, many of whom also cleared the land. By the WWII era, land ownership began to be transferred; as a result there was a trend toward consolidation into fewer, larger farms. Community leaders were concerned at the time that much of the land in Houghton County that could be used for farming went unused because of the relative idleness of the mines. After the war dairy products were the most important agricultural commodity in the county, followed closely by potatoes and livestock.

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<sup>33</sup> 1920 Federal Census. See Appendix A for more detail on specific farming families/households.

The Cohodas-Paoli company was the previous owner of the property that became the Paavola Wetlands Preserve in 2005.<sup>34</sup> Their firm represents an interesting connection of European immigrant entrepreneurs to the historical food system of the Paavola-Boston area and to the Upper Peninsula and the nation as a whole. The Cohodas family emigrated from Poland to the U.S. near the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, settling first in Wisconsin. Sam Cohodas and his elder brother left home as teens to work for their uncle shipping and distributing produce in the Copper Country.<sup>35</sup> Not long afterward, the brothers set out on their own, first as vegetable peddlers on the street and later opening the first produce retail shop in Houghton and a large produce warehouse on the shore of the Portage. In the 1920s and early 30s the Cohodas family expanded their land holdings in the Copper Country and partnered with their chief produce competitor Ralph Paoli. Given their later business plan, it is likely that their land expansion was for growing produce, especially apple orchards. In the mid-1930s Cohodas-Paoli moved their headquarters from Houghton to Ishpeming, Michigan. Not long after that they expanded their land holdings into downstate Michigan where they set up a vertically integrated process of orchard fruit growing, harvesting, and packing near Elberta.<sup>36</sup> Cohodas-Paoli later expanded on their vertically integrated business model by purchasing fruit orchards in Washington. By the 1960s they were the largest produce distributor in the nation, a remarkable development from their humble beginnings in Houghton.

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Boston was tied as much to agriculture as it was to mining. The 1906 Polk directory described Boston as a farming community between Hancock and Calumet. More than two-thirds of its farmers listed in the directory for Boston that year had Finnish surnames. By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century potatoes were the dominant crop there. In 1951 a new potato washing plant was established in Ripley to service the grower's warehouses in Boston. But as was the case with much of the area, after the mines closed in the mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century, commercial farming went by the wayside as well. Even into the late 1980s, only two farms were listed by the Chamber of Commerce in the Boston area. A very recent cultural landscape survey (CLS) conducted for the National Park Service also concluded that little commercial farming occurs in the area surrounding Boston location. The CLS also noted that some of the former farmsteads have become "suburban residences," likely for those working in Hancock or Houghton<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> Property deed register, Houghton County, Michigan.

<sup>35</sup> Treloar, 1977.

<sup>36</sup> Sam M Cohodas papers, MSS-018, Northern Michigan University; Biographical files 920BF Cohodas, Sam M., Marquette Regional History Center. *The Mining Journal* Apr. 4, 1988; *Detroit Free Press* Apr. 21, 1988.

<sup>37</sup> Gollanek, E. 2012. Boston-Tecumseh District HOU4BOS. Prepared for the Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission, manuscript on file; Busch, et al. 2013 Copper Country Survey: Final Report and Historic Preservation Plan. Prepared for the Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission, manuscript on file.

In contrast to Boston, agriculture in Paavola was on a smaller, less commercially oriented scale. Eleanor Noponen Bertolli (b. 1920) who was born and raised there, remembers no commercial farming in and around Paavola. Instead, agriculture was home or subsistence based, with neighbors occasionally trading with each other.<sup>38</sup> Bertolli notes that the three subsistence-based farmstead homes on the edge of the Paavola community were known as “Three Corner Town,” including the farmstead remains on the Paavola Wetlands Preserve trail system. She emphasizes that “everyone grew their own vegetables” and that her brother George, whose widow later resided in the farmstead on the Paavola Wetlands Preserve, had a “beautiful” vegetable garden. Some homes in Paavola had dairy cows for their own use. The excess milk was also sold, but not at a commercial level. Even though Paavola farming was small scale, two members of Paavola’s Helpakka family, Ivar and Weino, participated in the Houghton County Cooperative Potato Warehouse Association in 1942.

The Karjala-Noponen homestead represents the architectural survival of Paavola’s past as a community of Finnish farmers and miners. As mentioned above, family members recall that the farmstead was subsistence based rather than commercial. It is the only remaining standing structure from the “Three Corner Town” section of town. The farmstead was owned by multiple generations of the Karjala family. The most recent resident, Helen Karjala Noponen, was likely born in her family home along with her siblings. Helen moved into town (Paavola) after she married a young Finnish-American man named George Noponen who was also born in Paavola. After her husband’s untimely death prior to World War II, Helen Karjala Noponen moved back to her parent’s home in Three Corner Town, where she lived until late in life.

The farmstead home was constructed around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a 1 ½ story structure. The ground floor is divided into two halves; the partial second floor is an open attic with a painted floor and finished walls. The home’s interior walls were insulated with newspaper, likely from the period of its construction. Currently the plaster and lathe walls of the ground floor are distinctive for their bright blue painted wainscoting. The second floor attic is notable for some modifications that were made in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Around that time, newspapers and magazine pages of the period were affixed to the walls, probably by Helen Noponen, in what was likely an attempt to seal gaps between the attic boards. This was further enhanced by tin food cans that were carefully split and trimmed and then neatly installed along the cracks with small finishing nails.

A small addition was added to the homestead in the post-war period, based on the decorative finishes found there. This addition housed a kitchen and a bathroom. A previous report<sup>39</sup> was unclear on the construction date of the kitchen, but recent observation of the addition as it was removed from the house structure in Fall 2012 showed that it was an integrated part of the addition. The deteriorated condition of the addition, which threatened the integrity of the structure

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38 Eleanor Noponen Bertolli, interview, July 2013.

39 McLean 2007.

as a whole, necessitated its teardown. Volunteers from Michigan Tech’s Phi Kappa Tau fraternity and members of the Keweenaw Land Trust executed the teardown during an early season snowfall. The teardown revealed a vernacular character to the addition that mimicked some of the make-do solutions of the pre-war period; namely, multiple layers of linoleum served as insulation *under* the floor boards, and pipes under the house were held in place by slings of metal cloth and leather strapping that had probably been a belt. These solutions were perhaps not as elegant looking as the neat rows of tin can fragment in the attic, but they both show resourcefulness.

A 1989 Keweenaw Chamber of Commerce publication, in conjunction with 4H, celebrated agriculture in the area with the following opening statement:

“Little did the Finnish immigrants who carved the farms out of our inhospitable land, in an equally inhospitable climate, foresee that a century later these same farms would collectively emerge as a model agricultural community. Nor, in their quest to escape working underground in mines, did they realize the diversification and practical methods they so naturally employed would become the legacy of the successful agricultural industry that exists in the Copper Country today.”<sup>40</sup>

That publication also featured three farms in the Boston area that focused on raising strawberries and vegetables. No farms were noted in the vicinity of Paavola. Despite the celebratory tone of the Chamber of Commerce publication, a number of small independent farms were lost to the development and expansion of the Houghton County Airport in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The small farms that did survive, like the Sotala farm of Boston location, participated in the region’s farmers’ markets. Farms in the post-war era disappeared or consolidated as a result of improved agricultural machinery and the loss of the area’s “cheap labor”.<sup>41</sup> Near the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a regional newspaper wrote nostalgically of agriculture in the area:

“There was a time when farming in the Upper Peninsula was as much a part of the economy as logging and mining. Potato, strawberry, dairy and cattle farms marketed goods through local cooperatives, and potato warehouses and milk trucks were as common as shaft houses and logging trucks.”<sup>42</sup>

## COMMUNITY

The economic efforts of the people of the Copper Country are grounded in their communities. Boston and Paavola, both adjacent to landscapes owned and managed by the Keweenaw Land Trust, are each distinctive communities that began and then thrived in the mining era only to see their populations decline after active mining ended here. Boston represents a

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<sup>40</sup> Keweenaw Peninsula Chamber of Commerce 1989 “Agricultural Guide to the Keweenaw.”

<sup>41</sup> *DMG* Mar. 25, 1982.

<sup>42</sup> *The Upper Peninsula Post* Aug. 27 1995 p. 6.

successful shift from a mixed-ethnicity mining location to a community that emphasized commercial agriculture and had a lively social life. From its beginning, Paavola is distinct as an almost exclusively Finnish community devoted largely to agrarian life and the promotion of Finnish cultural values.

### Boston

Boston began in the 1860s as a copper mine location on the middle lode serving the short lived Albany & Boston mine. As the fortunes of the nearby copper mines rose and fell the community grew to embrace commercial agriculture as well. Boston's distinctiveness as a community peaked in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with great public enthusiasm for its sports teams and general store. As mining in the Copper Country ended in the 1960s and commercial agriculture trickled away by the turn of the 21st century, Boston evolved into a residential community for Hancock to the south.

Though not yet called Boston in the annual reports of the period, between 1860 and 1864 the Albany & Boston mine location was well on its way toward becoming a thriving community. In hopes of "attract[ing] family men" in those years, the company established a school house that served 25 students including some children from the neighboring St. Mary's Copper Mining Company location. The mine was quite optimistic and proud of its emerging community, as reflected in its annual reports. In 1864 there were 235 residents including 75 women and 65 children under 15 years old; the other half of the population were the mine workers themselves.<sup>43</sup> The mine employed mostly men from the U.S., Canada, England, and Ireland. The majority of them could read and write.<sup>44</sup>

Around the turn of the century, Boston was a thriving independent community with a school, multiple churches, and general stores.<sup>45</sup> Boston was large enough that by the end of the company's first year of service in 1900, the Houghton County Traction Company provided Boston's residents with streetcar service to Hancock.<sup>46</sup> In that same year, the town established a post office with Jemma White as its first postmaster. Unfortunately there was some confusion between mail deliveries to Boston, Michigan and Boston, Massachusetts. The solution was in April 1906 to officially rename the post office as Demmon, after one of the mining executives.<sup>47</sup> In this era, Boston children attended classes at the Franklin Jr. School from kindergarten to 10th grade, and then they

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<sup>43</sup> Albany & Boston Mining Co. 1861, 1864, 1865 Report of the Directors of the Albany & Boston Mining Co. to the Stockholders. MTUA&CCHC Box 5 Folder 12.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Polk Directory 1901-1908. In the 1901-2 directory Boston is described as "an important mining village."

<sup>46</sup> Busch 2013.

<sup>47</sup> DMG Oct. 4, 1980; The Polk directory from 1907-8 shifted to calling the town Demmon as well.



could finish high school in Calumet, Hancock, or Houghton. Before 1909 the only store in town was James H. Seager & Co, more commonly known as the Boston Store. After that year the town had a co-op flour mill and three general stores – Kemppainen Bros., Pykonen, and J.H. Seager & Co., and also the Waarala confectionary. In the years before World War I, Boston’s population grew steadily to just under 1,000 residents.<sup>48</sup>

In the years after World War I, Boston’s population remained steady as some of the town’s amenities and infrastructure diversified. By 1916, Boston had added a telephone connection, expanded its number of churches to three – Evangelical Lutheran, Apostolic Lutheran, and Methodist Episcopal – and added a high school to supplement the already established Boston School.<sup>49</sup> Most of Boston’s residents at that time were working for the Franklin Mining Company at its Franklin Jr. mine. In addition to miners and laborers, and their families, the town’s residents also included Franklin’s physician, gardener, blacksmith, and carpenter. Expansion was not found in all sectors however; in this period Boston’s general stores were reduced to one, the J.H. Seeger and Co. store, which employed two clerks.<sup>50</sup>

Active mining around Boston ended in the late teens and the townspeople turned more and more to agriculture as a way to make a living. For example, the town added three dairies in 1917 to accommodate the increased number of dairy cattle nearby. Rural Property Assessment surveys conducted two decades later record some of the land around Boston being used for growing hay and other schedule “A” crops; the land that wasn’t actively cultivated was a mixture between hardwood stands and cutover land.<sup>51</sup> Sketch maps from the property surveys show the road that branched from US 41 to go past Boston was called the Cloverland Road, which was a name associated with farming in the Upper Midwest. The 1937 property surveys listed local trading centers alternately as Boston or Demmon, showing that the residents continued to alternate between these names. Boston, at that time, also had a dance hall and an athletic field on its untillable pastureland. Not surprisingly, the town’s Finnish Apostolic Lutheran church was surrounded by lots between County Road and Boston Pond that were owned by people with Finnish surnames.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> DMG Dec. 2, 1978; DMG “Copper Country 2000.”

<sup>49</sup> Formerly known as the Franklin Jr. School.

<sup>50</sup> Office of the Franklin Mining Company, Apr. 2, 1914, manuscript on file, MTUA&CCHC; Dodge 1973; Romig 1986; Polk Directory 1916-17.

<sup>51</sup> Rural Property Survey 1937; For example, land usage on one property in the late 1940s indicates the presence of a potato barn and vacant farmland on the same property; in 1970 the same property is described as a truck farm. DMG Jun. 20 1959.

<sup>52</sup> Rural Property Survey 1937.

The Boston Store, which operated from 1902 to the late 1970s, was an important center of commerce for the community.<sup>53</sup> During its nearly 80 years of operation, the store had four owners/proprietors. The first group, Seager & Co., had their main store in Franklin location and another store in Ripley as well. According to Jack Waara, age 91 in 2002, the Boston store structure was originally built in the Rhode Island location in the late 1800s and “hailed cross-county by horse” to begin business in Boston in 1902. It served the community as a gathering spot for gossip and for farmers to trade. It was reported in the *Daily Mining Gazette* that “[a]ll of the stock for the store – including dry goods such as cloth, groceries, sausages made at a meat plant in Boston, and boots for miners were transported from the main store on Quincy Hill by horse and buggy in good or bad weather.” The descendants of the second proprietor, Gus Waarala, Sr., describe the store as a “prominent landmark.” Waarala also owned a pool hall/candy store with some groceries. In the Jaehnig period of ownership, the store was served by a bus line. It was said that they had a good meat department and at some time had a slaughterhouse in back of the store.<sup>54</sup>

In mid 1970s, two men with degrees from Michigan Tech, Glenn Pyhtila and Allan Ponnikas, sought to open a business in the former Boston Store.<sup>55</sup> Their intention was to make it a country store that employed both a butcher and a clerk. The store was outfitted with hitching posts for horses; they extended the country store theme by also selling saddlery and related products. They expected to serve customers from the area surrounding Boston; including Salo, Oneco, Highway, Rhode Island, St. Mary’s, and Arcadian. They were willing to deliver to their customers for a fee.<sup>56</sup>

Boston’s sense of community identity and cohesiveness centered on public resources and activities. The Boston community at times had a baseball team and a hockey team, both of which were quite successful in the Upper Peninsula. Their first sports organization was a baseball team. In the 1910 season the team had an African-American player known as “Paddy”, “who like so many others was a miner.”<sup>57</sup> The town’s baseball team was the Boston Pirates whose baseball diamond was known as Fenway Park; they were the champions of the U.P. in 1935. Fenway Park was outfitted with a dugout, bleachers, scoreboard, and concession stand.

In the decades immediately post-war, the community hockey team was quite competitive in the larger region and review articles celebrating the achievements of Boston’s hockey team showed up in the local newspaper. The *Daily Mining Gazette* in 1947 featured a colorful description of the community:

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<sup>53</sup> *DMG* Apr.27, 2002.

<sup>54</sup> *DMG* Apr.27, 2002.

<sup>55</sup> *DMG* Jul. 3, 1976.

<sup>56</sup> *DMG* Apr. 27, 2002.

<sup>57</sup> *DMG* Nov. 26, 1983; *DMG* “Copper Country 2000.”

“You never heard of Boston, Mich.? Well neither have a lot of people. It isn’t even listed on most maps. It is a community of 300 located between Hancock and Calumet on old US 41. It consists of two stores, two gas stations, a church, and a flaming hockey spirit. There’s not even a school or a passenger train stop within five miles, or a spot where a fellow can whet a parched lip. But there’s plenty of hockey enthusiasm – has been for years, in fact.”<sup>58</sup>

The above description appears in the context of a news article on the formation of a Boston-based hockey team set to compete in a regional hockey circuit. If successful, they would have represented the smallest town in any hockey league.

Labor festivals held into the 1980s show that Boston’s labor history was not forgotten by its post-mining era residents. Into the present there continue to be accounts in the local newspapers celebrating the history of Boston as an important mining community. These include review stories and accounts of people seeking to preserve aspects of the community and its built environment. For example, the community was famed for the “Great Boston Train Robbery” where C&H payroll was stolen from a mail car and for being the birthplace of “Big Louie” Moilanen. Labor Day celebrations were recorded in the local newspaper in the 1970s and 1980s. The 1975 celebration was its third annual. The event was held at the community center and parking was available at Fenway. The 1981 Labor Day event was also held at the community center. This event was highlighted by an arranged reuse of the local stacks, described as “...smoke in the skies will direct newcomers to the... celebration.... The two old Boston Mining Co. stacks will again pour forth smoke, once a common sight in this now inactive mining community.”<sup>59</sup>

After its peak of nearly 1000 residents in the 1910s, Boston’s population began to drop steadily, down to around 280 residents in 1940 and then declining further still through the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>60</sup> Despite their dwindling population, the town made improvements in 1968 by breaking ground for a new fire station and community hall. Money for the construction of this combined structure was raised by a local business development committee. As of 2000 Boston had become a “residential and agricultural town” with approximately 100 residents.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *DMG* Oct. 5, 1947.

<sup>59</sup> *DMG* Aug. 30, 1975; *DMG* Aug 28, 1981.

<sup>60</sup> 1940 Federal Census. The local post office also closed in 1933.

<sup>61</sup> Gollanek, E. 2012. Boston-Tecumseh District HOU4BOS. Prepared for the Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission, manuscript on file; Busch, et al. 2013 Copper Country Survey: Final Report and Historic Preservation Plan. Prepared for the Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission, manuscript on file.

## Paavola

Paavola began life as Concord City. Though it was not strictly a mining location, unlike Boston, the optimism of Concord City's early years was tied to the boosterism of the Arcadian Mining Company and other nearby short-lived mines near the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Daily Mining Gazette described Concord City as "a thriving little community" that was growing "rapidly" in response to development at the Arcadian Mine. Optimism was such that the paper reported that "the population of the little town will be on the increase from now on."<sup>62</sup> Within the first decade of the 1900s the community's character quickly solidified into a Finnish enclave with strong agrarian interests and strong mining labor partisanship. Paavola, as it was known from 1909, exemplified a common local Finnish desire to move away from mining toward household subsistence agriculture. Throughout its history the community had an uneasy relationship with mining. Though mining was part of its beginning, Paavola's residents were not clearly affiliated with any one mine, though at its population peak many of the town's men were employed in them.<sup>63</sup> Paavola's most enduring marks on the Copper Country landscape are the *suo ojat* and its farmsteads, both derived from its agricultural character.<sup>64</sup>

John Kustaa Paavola, for whom the town was re-named, was born in Finland in 1859. He, his wife, and the first three of their eventual 11 children moved to the Copper Country in the mid-1880s where John worked as a miner and stone cutter.<sup>65</sup> They settled near Concord City. By 1895, John had acquired 160 acres of land adjacent to Concord City, satisfying a dream held by many Finnish immigrants of that era to own farm land; in that year he deeded 40 acres (the south ¼ of Section 19) to the town for public use.<sup>66</sup> As it was originally platted, Concord City had ten streets that encompassed fifteen blocks. A recent pedestrian survey shows that only the south-central portion of the original plat has dwellings and other structures remaining. In some cases, platted streets were never fully developed and instead became drainage ditches or alleyways.<sup>67</sup>

In 1909, the residents of Concord City petitioned the U.S. government for a post office, submitting 100 signatures along with the request.<sup>68</sup> The town's 60 families felt that it was too

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<sup>62</sup> DMG Mar. 20, 1909.

<sup>63</sup> 1920 Federal Census.

<sup>64</sup> *Suo ojat* is Finnish for "swamp ditch," clearly referring to an effort to drain the land for agricultural use. See above for economic and geographic details on agriculture in/near Paavola. Oral histories from Scott 2005 and interviews conducted by the author.

<sup>65</sup> Swink 2012 *The PAAVOLA and Allied Families of Michigan and Minnesota*. FAHCA.

<sup>66</sup> Whitaker 1926; Swink 2012.

<sup>67</sup> See Appendix B for an image of the original plat and extant streets.

<sup>68</sup> DMG Mar. 20, 1909.

inconvenient to pick up their mail in Hancock or Franklin. In their petition Concord City's residents changed the town's name to honor John Kustaa Paavola. John Henry Paavola, 5<sup>th</sup> child of John Kustaa, then became its first postmaster.<sup>69</sup> He was postmaster from June 1909 to October 1910. Later on John Henry's sister, Mary Pietila, was Paavola's third postmaster. The town's general store held the post office in its earliest days. That office also served mail clients from Arcadian, Sunshine location, and Mesnard. At its height the office served 100 box holders. It was a social center for many of the older men of the town, who would wait there for their mail and reminisce with each other. Paavola's final post office was run out of the home of its last postmaster, Jennie Kesti, until her retirement in 1966, at which time the post office closed its service.<sup>70</sup> The post office was a key element of Paavola's infrastructure and its end was prominently mourned in the Copper Country's largest newspaper at that time. The fate of the town's school rose and fell much like its post office. The residents of Concord City began a school for their children in 1900. The school reportedly closed forty years later, probably due to declining population, at which point the Paavola school board purchased a bus to take the children to school in Hancock.

Paavola's cultural underpinnings were almost exclusively Finnish; the Daily Mining Gazette noted, in a tone of soft racism, that "[a]n Englishman, Croatian, Italian, Frenchman or the Irish hadn't made themselves known to the area people."<sup>71</sup> The same article's reflections upon early daily life in the town, possibly based on retiring postmistress Jennie Kesti's recollections, made it sound idyllic. Fathers lovingly supervised their children in planting potatoes in the family garden or eating candy at the general store. Families raised their own livestock, such as cows, horses, chickens, ducks, or pigs and preserved berries for the winter. Families tended to have many children (8-14) who were well disciplined, thanks to the watchful eyes of elder siblings, and obeyed curfews. The townspeople enjoyed saunas, fueled by wood smoke, on Wednesday and Saturday nights. Some of these families opened their saunas to the public. The Daily Mining Gazette also reported that not all of the residents knew English as well as Finnish, so the postmaster would help those who only spoke Finnish when they would purchase from mail order catalogs.

In the early 1900s, the community's close proximity to several small nearby mines made it a popular place for miners and their families to settle. It was of special interest to miners working for QMC because they were able to purchase existing structures from the Arcadian mine's location to move to Paavola after that mine's demise. Arcadian had as many as 150 "dwelling houses" that these later miners could have utilized.<sup>72</sup> In 1908 the executives of the QMC purchased ten 6-room houses from the Arcadian mine for \$175 each; six of these were then moved to Concord City for

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<sup>69</sup> Swink 2012. John Henry was born in 1888 in Hancock, Michigan.

<sup>70</sup> *DMG* Jan. 14, 1967.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid*; Evangelical Lutheran Church Registry, manuscript on file, Microfilm Box 29 Reel #5 FAHC Archive.

<sup>72</sup> *The Copper Handbook* 1910.

\$275 each where they were placed atop stone foundations and cellars for \$500 each. The Quincy Mine executives believed that this plan was cheaper than wholly new construction. In an internal letter, the executives also noted that around 12 other Arcadian houses were purchased by “our miners” themselves and moved to Concord City, “the town site of the Arcadian property.” Quincy executives were pleased at what this might signal; “It expresses the returning confidence the miners have in the mine and their contentment to cast their lot with the future of the [Quincy] mine.” It is possible that the farmstead structure on the current Paavola Wetlands Preserve property was one of these former Arcadian structures.<sup>73</sup> The remains of this farmstead, and other homes in Paavola, represent the legacy of the townspeople’s transition from mining to farming.<sup>74</sup>

Since these homes were no longer company housing they allowed the miners a respite from their employer’s gaze, unlike the copper mining locations.<sup>75</sup> This was especially the case for those miners working for QMC. In this way these workers and their community were socially and politically independent of their mining company employers. This relative independence in the 1913-14 strike era meant that Paavola was a popular place for Finns to live because they felt removed from the watchful eyes of the mine bosses who did not own the town.<sup>76</sup> At the time there were concerns about voting blocs in Franklin Township, centered on the Paavola community, which might have advanced a Finnish workers’ agenda. There is also evidence that labor organizers used Paavola as a central location from which to plan the strike.

Perhaps evolving out of their prior pro-labor efforts, in the early 1920s, the residents developed an organization known as the Paavola Worker’s Club to provide “moral,” “intellectual,” and “social” support to members of the community. In 1921 the Paavola Workers Club was officially assembled.<sup>77</sup> The purpose for their organization was to support the residents of Paavola by sponsoring educational lectures, musical and literary entertainment, evening and Sunday school for workers, college(s) for the education of Finnish people – especially young people – and to hopefully establish a library. The group owned lot #1 in Block 7 of town, on the corner of Main and 5<sup>th</sup> streets, where their meeting house would be located. Their incorporating members were all men who were residents of Paavola; initial membership was 25 cents with 10 cents due from each member monthly. Interestingly, the incorporating document referenced the town both as Paavola and as Concord City.

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<sup>73</sup> Letter from Gen.Mgr. to President of QMC, May 20, 1908. 977.4 Kau 2 FAHC Archive.

<sup>74</sup> Whitaker 1926.

<sup>75</sup> Hoagland 2010.

<sup>76</sup> Kaunonen 2006 Manuscript on file, 977.4 Kau 2 FAHCA.

<sup>77</sup> Articles of Association, Paavola Workers Club July 19, 1921. FAHCA.

Most of the heads of household living in Paavola in the post-strike period were employed by the copper mines as either miners (30 persons) or laborers (23). Of the 19 occupations listed in the 1916-1917 Polk Directory for the 400 persons living in Paavola, over half were directly related to mining operations. Of the 82 residents listed as employed in that period, the remainder were mostly farmers (9 persons) and individuals working to support the community's infrastructure such as teacher, postmaster, and general store proprietor.<sup>78</sup>

The 1920 Federal Census also gives a picture of Paavola at that time, though it was listed as Concord City in the document.<sup>79</sup> There were approximately 250 people living in Paavola, in 50 households. Forty-five of the fifty heads of household were born in Finland; the exceptions were other Scandinavians from either Norway or Sweden, or men born in Michigan of Finnish or Norwegian parents. The ethnic makeup of their wives paralleled this trend as well. Across the community, the parental generation residing there in 1920 tended to be born in Finland, and their children born in Michigan, usually in the Copper Country. The church records of Paavola's Apostolic Lutheran church also reflect this progression; those in the registry that were born before 1900, especially those born between 1850-60, were born in Finland, whereas those church registrants born after 1900 tended to be born in Paavola itself or in neighboring towns such as Boston, Hancock, Franklin, Hubbell, Calumet, Red Jacket, or Osceola.<sup>80</sup> These people are all likely members, or descendants of, a group of several hundred families who emigrated from Finland to the Copper Country beginning in the 1890s. Paavola's 1920 era households were usually multi-generational, with 85 sons and 48 daughters of varying ages, including adult children living at home. Four of these households had three generations living together, with grandchildren of grade school age. Seven households also had individual single male boarders.

In the 1920 Federal census, of the 60 individuals with listed occupations, 49 of them worked for the copper mines in some capacity, with half as underground miners and most of the other half as mine laborers. Other employed men worked for the local hardware store and the local grocery store, including its shopkeeper. One woman was employed as a servant; otherwise no women are noted as working outside the home. Oral history narratives published by the Michigan Humanities Council described Paavola as a "little Finnish farming community" that was focused on dairy production.<sup>81</sup> An historian in the 1920s noted that it was popular for Finnish immigrants and their

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<sup>78</sup> Polk Directory 1916-1917.

<sup>79</sup> Federal Census 1920, accessed via HeritageQuest, MTUA&CCHC.

<sup>80</sup> Evangelical Lutheran Church Registry, FAHCA.

<sup>81</sup> Scott 2005 *Michigan Ghost Towns*. Scott interviewed Art and Enid Weiben, elderly residents of Paavola, in their home.

descendants in the Copper Country to divide their time during the year between working for the mines and tending to their own small scale agricultural production.<sup>82</sup>

Most of the farming households listed in both the Polk Directory for 1916-17 and also the 1920 Federal census owned their farms free and clear, though John Anderson's 40 acre farm was the only one to appear in the Farm Directory section of the 1916-17 Polk Directory. By 1920, Mr. Anderson had passed away and his wife and sons had taken over the farm's operation. Scott emphasized the agricultural character of Paavola in his description in *Michigan Shadow Towns*:

Some of the townsmen continued to work in the remaining mines, the last of which closed after 1940, but most people in Paavola were farmers. It became a center for farm and dairy products in the early 1900s. Were it not for the farms and the railroad, Paavola might have vanished long ago.<sup>83</sup>

In the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the farmstead landscape property that is now part of the Keweenaw Land Trust's Paavola Wetlands Preserve was occupied by the Karjala and Noponen families and leased through Cohodas-Paoli. The Karjala-Noponen homestead represents an architectural survival of Paavola's past as a community of Finnish farmers and miners. Family members recalled that the farmstead was subsistence-based rather than operated at a commercial level.<sup>84</sup> The farmstead was part of a sub-section of Paavola known locally as "Three Corner Town," where all of the homes were farmsteads; it is the only remaining structure from that area.

The farmstead was owned by multiple generations of the Karjala family. It is likely that Hilda Sophie Karjala, the woman who married the town's first postmaster, was related to the Karjala family that owned this farmstead.<sup>85</sup> The most recent resident, Helen Karjala Noponen, was likely born in her family home along with her siblings. Hilda Sophie Karjala, was Helen's elder sister.<sup>86</sup> Helen moved into town (Paavola) after she married a young Finnish-American man named George Noponen who was also born in Paavola. After her husband's untimely death prior to World War II, Helen Karjala Noponen moved back to her parent's home in Three Corner Town, where she lived until late in her life.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Whitaker 1926.

<sup>83</sup> Scott 2005 *Michigan Shadow Towns*.

<sup>84</sup> Eleanor Noponen Bertolli, interview, July 2013.

<sup>85</sup> Swink 2012. Hilda was born in 1894 in Calumet.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Eleanor Noponen Bertolli, interview, July 2013.



## LANDSCAPE AND WATER MANAGEMENT

While mining, agriculture, and community are all tied to place and landscape, the story of these neighboring landscapes – the Paavola Wetland Preserve and Boston Pond – beyond their economies, is one of contrasting Euro-American efforts at water management. The people of Paavola reclaimed land from the water. They brought with them from Finland a traditional agricultural practice called *suo ojat* or “swamp ditches.” At some point in the early 1900s they crafted these ditches to drain away water from the nearby former wetland. These ditches created relatively dry raised areas for cultivation.<sup>88</sup> This landscape feature was likely maintained for generations.

The *suo ojat* are visible on satellite images today more so than they are from the ground when the local vegetation is fully grown in. Water pools in the ditches, still draining away from the raised areas as originally intended. However, today the water flow is blocked in part by modern-surfaced roadways, such as US 41. Water flow out of the formerly cultivated area is also blocked by beaver dams.<sup>89</sup> The actions of the present day beavers at the preserve are returning the area back to wetland.

In contrast to the people of Paavola, but much like the beavers there, the people of Boston consolidated water on the landscape for their own purposes. In the early years of mining there, Boston Creek was dammed. This action created a pond to support the industrial process of the stamp mill built on its shore. Over the last 150 years the resulting pond has had a number of identities. First, as mentioned above, the pond was an important component of the copper mining process. As mining waned near Boston, the residents there came to see the pond as a recreational water body, their own lake. Multiple generations have enjoyed boating and fishing there, so much so that in the early 1960s the pond was stocked with fish to encourage its continued use.

Despite positive local perceptions of the pond, it was also a former industrial landscape that was subject to environmental regulation and remediation to protect the public. In 1992, the EPA designated the Boston Pond stamp sands (a 65 acre parcel on the northern shore of the pond) as part of the Torch Lake Superfund site in its Record of Decision. This was the result of site investigations of stamp sand locations in Houghton County which began in 1988 when the Torch Lake Superfund site boundaries and units were established. Human health hazards for stamp sands include exposure to metals through airborne dust. Environmental health hazards include exposure

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88 The specifics of their cultivation – the quantity and value of the crops, the acreage claimed by each farming family – were collected for the Federal Agricultural Census in 1920 but then that information was unfortunately destroyed in 1925.

89 Root 2013. manuscript on file. In her multi-species ethnography Root explores the relationship of beavers to the Paavola Wetlands Preserve landscape and to the people who visit the trail system there. The resulting beaver pond is a popular landscape feature on the site.

of surface waters to metal contamination by runoff from stamp sands. By 2012, 25 acres of the stamp sands had been remediated by being covered with soil and vegetation.

In the 1990s, tensions ran high in the Daily Mining Gazette when the paper reported that the Michigan Department of Natural Resources was weighing whether or not to continue maintaining the dam that keeps Boston Pond in place. In recent years the Keweenaw Land Trust acquired a portion of the south shore of Boston Pond in order to protect that landscape and maintain its access for the public.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Paavola Wetlands Preserve and Boston Pond Preserve are landscapes of agricultural and mining heritage. Mining gave way to agriculture in the area, multiple uses of the landscape left physical and cultural marks. The landscape began to be transformed in the mid-1800s from mixed hardwood forest to mining industry. A series of mines smaller in scale than C&H and Quincy, their neighbors to the north and south, tried to compete but failed on the less fruitful middle lode.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century copper mining had mostly given way to agriculture in this cutover region. The communities of Paavola and Boston were set in the midst of this changing landscape. These communities were officially independent of the mines but still related to them through their residents and trade. Agriculture in this area was conducted on a mixed scale, with mostly commercial farms near Boston and subsistence farms near Paavola.

Mining has left little legacy on the surface of the earth there, though Boston Pond itself is an most important exception. Agriculture is more apparent, with potato barns near Boston and water management ditches and farmsteads near Paavola. By the end of the 1970s these landscapes were well on their way to being residential and recreational. With the Keweenaw Land Trust's purchase and care of these landscapes their natural and cultural value will remain protected for the public.