

*Michigan's*  
**HABITANT  
HERITAGE**



## French-Canadian Genealogical Research in Houghton County, Michigan

John P. DuLong, Ph.D.\*

### Part I: Introduction and Historical Background

Many family historians in Michigan are aware of the French-Canadian settlements along the Detroit River. However, few of these researchers realize that Houghton County has a large population of French-Canadian descendants. Located on the Keweenaw Peninsula in the far north of Michigan, Houghton County has a rich history of French-Canadian communities. At the turn of the century Houghton County ranked second only to Detroit and surrounding Wayne County in the number of French-Canadian residents (4,426 vs. 3,114).<sup>1</sup>

Houghton is one of three counties comprising the Copper Country. The other two are Keweenaw to the north and Ontonagon to the south. The region gained its name from the deposits of copper mined from 1844 to 1968. Although French-Canadians also migrated to these neighboring Copper Country counties, most of them lived in Houghton County.

The French-Canadian communities in Houghton County were a thriving part of Franco-American culture in the Midwest. These communities never reached the same level of importance as other French-Canadian settlements in the Midwest, such as Kankakee, Illinois, or those in New England.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, they nourished French newspapers, French parishes and schools, French professionals, French businesses, and French mutual benefit societies. Houghton County made a real contribution to Franco-American culture and history.

Many French-Canadians in Michigan trace descent from these nineteenth century settlers along the shores of Lake Superior. This series of five articles will discuss French-Canadian genealogical research in Houghton County and will pay particular attention to patterns of migration, the communities they lived in, and the identification of records and depositories. I also discuss briefly techniques for making the leap back to Québec to continue research. Lastly, I provide a bibliography of relevant publications.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Census Office, Department of Interior. Census Reports, Population, Twelfth Census of the U.S. (Washington, D.C., 1901), Vol. I, Part I, Table 34, p. 760.

<sup>2</sup>D. Aidan McQuillan, "French-Canadian Communities in the American Upper Midwest During the Nineteenth Century," Cahiers de Géographie du Québec 23:58 (April 1979): 53-72.

<sup>3</sup>I would like to acknowledge the assistance of several people in helping me with this article. Theresa Sanderson Spence, University Archivist, Michigan Technological University, was very helpful in preparation of this article and has facilitated my own genealogical research over the years. Several local parish priest who answered my many questions about their records deserve my thanks. In particular, I want to remember the late Fr. Weber of St. Ignatius Loyola in Houghton who was always gracious in making the parish registers so accessible to me. I want to thank the clerks at the courthouse for their patience with me, especially Elizabeth M. Rompf, the recently retired Deputy Clerk. I have pestered these clerks almost every Summer since I was twelve years old. Clarence J. Monette and Dr. Charles K. Hyde were also kind enough to comment on an earlier draft of this paper. My mother and father, my own living local historians, have also been helpful with background details and clues. Lastly, I want to thank my wife and daughters who allowed me to collect the information I needed for this paper on our Summer vacations. The material for this article is in great part based on my own research efforts in the Copper County. Any errors are of course mine.

## Migration

Michigan has experienced two distinct waves of French-Canadian migration. The first wave occurred before the American Revolution and the second after the Civil War. In the first wave of migration Michigan was under the control of the French during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Michilimackinac and Detroit were the centers of settlement. Both communities were deeply involved in the fur trade and closely tied to neighboring Indian tribes through business and family relationships. After 1796 Michilimackinac gradually dwindled as the fur trade crumbled. The French-Canadians in Detroit also faced the death of the fur trade and rapid urbanization. Many of them fled Yankee advancement in Detroit for more rural communities on the Ontario side of the river or in Frenchtown (Monroe), Michigan. Most French-Canadians in the Detroit River area claim descent from these early settlers.

Unlike the first wave of French-Canadian immigrants, the second wave did not participate in the fur trade. Nor were they closely associated with Indian tribes and even fewer in this wave intermarried with Indians. Most of them came to Michigan to work in the lumber trade or as surface workers in the copper or iron mines. The regions they moved to were Saginaw and Alpena in the lower peninsula and the western end of the upper peninsula. The largest numbers settling in Houghton County.

Although the Jesuits had a mission at Keweenaw Bay in the seventeenth century, and the French made several efforts to mine copper during their rule, the Copper Country had not been an area of settlement for colonial French-Canadians as was the Detroit River region. Some adventurous French-Canadians deserted the dying fur trade and moved into the Copper Country in the mid-1840's, as soon as the copper range was opened. However, most of them did not start to migrate to Houghton County until the end of the Civil War. The peak of French-Canadian immigration in the United States was between 1880 and 1890. Migration slowly tapered off and then dropped dramatically after the Great Depression of the 1930's.<sup>4</sup>

There were several factors behind this nineteenth century wave of immigration. The dismal agricultural situation was perhaps the single most important motivator. Agriculture in Québec was shifting from crops to dairy which required fewer laborers. Also, due to inefficient cultivation techniques employed during the colonial period, much of the land's productivity was inadequate. Moreover, there was a shortage of virgin land for new families to start on. As the amount of available land was decreasing, the population was increasing due to sustained high levels of fertility among the French-Canadians. Lastly, Québec had little industrialization to support the growing number of surplus farm laborers.<sup>5</sup>

While Québec industrialized at a painfully slow pace, across the border, in New England, there were abundant employment opportunities in the textile mills. Railroad lines connecting Québec and New England made emigration easy. However, the Catholic hierarchy in Québec and lay French-Canadian leaders tried to discourage migration to New England. They saw it as a hostile environment which was urban, industrial, and overwhelmingly Protestant. Instead, they encouraged migration to the American Midwest and Canadian West. Robert Painchaud, a scholar of French-Canadian western migration, noted:

Essentially, all shared in the belief that French Canadians belonged to an agricultural society, and that taking up homesteads in Western Canada was preferable to the corrupting influence of factory towns in New England. Furthermore, given their romantic attachment to the Northwest as the land first brought under European control by French Canadians during the

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<sup>4</sup>Yolande Lavoie, L'Émigration des Québécois aux États-Unis de 1840 à 1930 (Québec: Éditeur officiel du Québec, 1981), p. 52.

<sup>5</sup>Elliot Robert Barkan, "French Canadians," in The Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups, ed. Stephan Thernstrom (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1980), pp. 391-392. Fernand Ouellet, Economic and Social History of Québec, 1760-1850 (Ottawa: Institute of Canadian Studies, Carleton University, 1980), passim.

French *régime*, they clung to the notion that French Canadians must remain strongly attached to and present in that part of the continent.<sup>6</sup>

Although he was speaking in particular about the Canadian West, his comments also hold true for the American Midwest. The belief among French-Canadian intellectuals was that their emigrants should move into the old areas developed by the fur trade and work in lumbering and farming. They would then be more likely to maintain their language, culture, and religion. It is ironic that now, a hundred years later, the French-Canadian communities in heathen New England have done a far better job of preserving their language and culture than those in the Midwest.

The lure of jobs associated with the copper mines attracted them towards Houghton County. Few of them ever worked inside the mines, rather they found jobs as mine surface workers, carpenters, lumberjacks, teamsters, or worked in the stamp mill or smelters processing the copper ore.<sup>7</sup>

The water transportation system of the Great Lakes made it easy for French-Canadians to migrate to Houghton County. Many of the first immigrants arrived via steamships that passed through the St. Mary's Falls Ship Canal at Sault Ste. Marie. Eventually, railroad service connected Houghton County with the east. This simplified migration and even made trips home to visit family and friends possible. A 1909 advertisement for the Copper Range Railroad proclaims that passengers can make the pilgrimage from Houghton to Ste. Anne-de-Beaupré via Chicago and the Grand Trunk Railway for only \$27.50.<sup>8</sup> The Minneapolis, St. Paul, & Sault Ste. Marie as well as the Duluth, South Shore, & Atlantic railways both offered service from the Copper Country to Québec and the Maritimes.<sup>9</sup>

The French-Canadian pattern of migration was unlike the typical Irish serial model which many other immigrant groups followed. The Irish immigrant to America was usually a single male. The arriving immigrant would work to send money home to bring over siblings, parents, children, and spouses. For French-Canadians immigration was more of an immediate family affair.<sup>10</sup> Although some of the French-Canadians undoubtedly sent money home to bring over other relatives, the typical pattern was to arrive in America as an intact family unit of father, mother, and children. Consequently, the French-Canadians had fewer difficulties with unattached single men living in a frontier mining community. They were more concerned with how to feed their large families.

As with the rest of the United States, migration from Québec slowly dwindled and eventually stopped. Several factors affected the pattern of migration including bitterness over the 1913 strike, growing industrialization in Québec, and declining mine productivity and job opportunities in the Copper Country. Nevertheless, this wave of Québec immigrants from 1860 to 1920 left behind several thriving French-Canadian communities in Houghton County.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Robert Painchaud, "French-Canadian Historiography and Franco-Catholic Settlement in Western Canada, 1870-1915," Canadian Historical Review 59:4 (December 1978): 447-466, p.455.

<sup>7</sup>Donald Chaput, The Cliff: America's First Great Copper Mine (Kalamazoo, MI: Sequoia Press, 1971), p. 97.

<sup>8</sup>C. Warren Van der Hill, Settling the Great Lakes Frontier: Immigration to Michigan, 1837-1924 (Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission, 1970), p. 11.

<sup>9</sup>A. Bourbonnière. Les Guide Français des États Unis (3rd ed., Lowell, MA: La Société de Publications Françaises des États-Unis, 1891), p. 8.

<sup>10</sup>Jay P. Dolan, The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1985), pp. 133-134 and 153-154.

<sup>11</sup>So far no study has been done on the origin of French-Canadian settlers in Houghton County. It is unclear where they came from in Québec. My impression is that more came from the Montréal region than from other parts of the province, but this is only based on my own family research. While doing my own research I have also stumbled across several Acadian surnames in the records of Houghton County.

## French-Canadian Communities

The following table lists the French-Canadian communities in Houghton County, the townships they are located within, and the local Catholic parishes they used:

### French-Canadian Settlements

Community	Township	Parish
Beacon Hill	Stanton	Holy Trinity
Calumet	Calumet	Sacred Heart St. Louis St. Anne
Chassell	Chassell	St. Anne
Dollar Bay	Osceola	St. Francis of Assisi
Edgemere	Stanton	
Freda	Stanton	
Frenchtown	Franklin	Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Hancock	Quincy	St. Anne St. Joseph
Houghton	Portage	St. Ignatius Loyola
Hubbell	Torch Lake	St. Cecilia
Hurontown	Portage	
Lake Linden	Schoolcraft	St. Joseph
Laurium	Calumet	
Mason	Osceola	
Osceola	Osceola	
Redridge	Stanton	St. Ann?
Tamarack Mills	Osceola	

The French-Canadians mostly settled in Lake Linden, Hubbell, Dollar Bay, and Chassell. Many also lived in Calumet, Laurium, Hancock, and Houghton where they were surrounded by other ethnic groups. A few also lived in the hamlets of Frenchtown, Hurontown, Mason, Osceola, and Tamarack Mills. Some could be found in the boom towns of Beacon Hill, Edgemere, Freda, and Redridge. All of these settlements were near important surface mining facilities or lumbering operations.<sup>12</sup>

Lake Linden became the center of French-Canadian culture in the Copper County due in great part to one man, Joseph Grégoire. Grégoire was born in 1833 at St. Valentine, Québec. He came to the Copper Country in the mid-1850's and moved to Houghton in 1859. In 1867 he established on the shores of Torch Lake the hamlet of Gregoryville, a "suburb" of the village of Lake Linden. From this location he operated a saw mill which made lumber, doors, sashes, and blinds. He was the premier French-Canadian businessman in the region. According to a plaque in St. Joseph's church, he was known as the "Father of the French Canadians of Lake Superior." He earned this title because he offered jobs to immigrants from Québec. Many French-Canadians in the Copper Country had their first employment working for Grégoire. Eventually, many of them moved on

<sup>12</sup>Although the French-Canadians might be the majority in any particular village or neighborhood, they lived in a region with a tumultuous mixture of ethnic groups including Cornish, Irish, Germans, Poles, Finns, Italians, Croats, Slavs, Greeks, Arabs, Blacks, and even Chinese. The only real minority group in Houghton County were Yankees. French-Canadians in New England also lived in heterogeneous communities, but these cousins were surrounded by constant reminders that they had settled in the homeland of the Puritan Yankees.

to working surface jobs at the mining companies. Grégoire never married and died childless in 1895. He was buried in Mount Calvary Cemetery outside of Lake Linden.<sup>13</sup>

Lake Linden was also important because it was the home of three French-Canadian newspapers: Le Franc-Pionnier: Organe de la Population Française du Lac Supérieur, L'Union Franco-Américaine, and Le Courier du Michigan. Although the first two papers lasted only a brief time, the Courier du Michigan was published in Lake Linden from 1912 to 1919 when it moved to Detroit where it was published until 1959.<sup>14</sup>

This key village was also the site of several French-Canadian businesses and professionals. Moreover, its local French-Canadian parish, St. Joseph's, was active in preserving the culture and language of its parishioners. The parish established St. Anne's Academy in 1886 and its teaching nuns were either from Québec or of French-Canadian ancestry.<sup>15</sup> The village was also the site of active French-Canadian mutual benefit societies, such as, La Société St. Jean-Baptiste and L'Association Canado-Américaine.

Although the local inhabitants called Lake Linden "Little Canada" or "Frenchtown," French-Canadians were found in large numbers in other Houghton County hamlets as well.<sup>16</sup> They dominated Hubbell, the Torch Lake neighbor of Lake Linden, where they worked in the stamp mills. Dollar Bay and Chassell, both on Portage Lake, had substantial French-Canadian populations. Houghton, the county seat, had many French-Canadians, as did its sister village of Hancock. However, the French-Canadians in Houghton and Hancock were never in control of local parish affairs. Lastly, the French-Canadians in Calumet had their own parish, but then so did several other ethnic groups.<sup>17</sup>

In its heyday, the Calumet area was the home of the mighty Calumet and Hecla (C&H) Mining Company and the center of the world's copper mining. Many French-Canadians worked in the stamp mills, smelters, and surface buildings of C&H or the smaller Quincy Mining Company located near Hancock. C&H and Quincy (as well as smaller companies such as Ahmeek, Tamarack, and Osceola) operated stamp mills along Torch Lake which employed many French-Canadians. These mills crushed the rock and separated the copper from it.

With the reduction in migration from Canada, the influence of French-Canadians in their communities gradually declined. Today masses are no longer in French, many of the Catholic schools are closed, St. Anne's parish in Calumet closed several years ago, there are no French newspapers published anywhere in Michigan, and the mutual benefit societies no longer meet. French is more likely heard in the nursing homes rather than on the street. These communities are now very American with only curious residuals of their past, such as the words "Eglise Saint-Joseph" carved in the Jacobsville sandstone over the doorway of the church or French tombstones in the cemetery.

The copper mines brought French-Canadians to Houghton County, when the mines were no longer productive the French-Canadians started to leave the area. Besides the falling price of copper, competition from cheaper Western mines, and depleted copper reserves, the tragic 1913 strike also influenced the decision of many

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<sup>13</sup>Clarence J. Monette, Gregoryville: The History of a Hamlet Located Across from Lake Linden, Michigan (Lake Linden, MI: Privately Printed, 1974).

<sup>14</sup>George J. Joyaux, "French Press in Michigan: A Bibliography," Michigan History 36:3 (September 1952): 260-278, and "French Press in Michigan," Michigan History 37:2 (June 1953): 155-165. Van der Hill, Settling the Great Lakes, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>15</sup>St. Joseph Church, Lake Linden, Michigan, 1871-1971 (Lake Linden, MI: Privately printed centennial history, 1971), p. 29.

<sup>16</sup>Clarence J. Monette, The History of Lake Linden, Michigan (Lake Linden, MI: Privately Printed, 1975), p. 2.

<sup>17</sup>Calumet was not only ethnically diverse it was also, strictly speaking, not one village, but a confusing combination of mining hamlets including: Red Jacket, Yellow Jacket, Blue Jacket, Hecla, Calumet, Raymbaultown, Osceola, Albion, Tamarack, Centennial Heights, and the somewhat independent Laurium.

Houghton County residents to leave. French-Canadians and their children began to migrate from Houghton County to seek better jobs in the industrial areas of Michigan's lower peninsula and in neighboring states. The closing of C&H in 1968 was the end of the copper mining era. By that time many of Houghton County's residents had already moved to Detroit to work in the automobile industry. Descendants of nineteenth century Copper Country French-Canadians now live in the same Detroit River area pioneered by eighteenth century French-Canadians.

#### Available Records for Genealogical Research

Many valuable records exist which will help family historians trace their lines through Houghton County and back to Québec. The following articles in this series will discuss the available records. Among these records are: county and township vital records, naturalization records, wills and probate records, land records, newspapers and obituaries, city directories, mining company records, cemetery records, parish registers, and lastly, state and federal censuses. Most of these sources have survived rather well despite the ravages of time and neglect. Moreover, they are accessible at several locations, including: Houghton County Courthouse, Michigan Technological University, the Library of Michigan, the Michigan State Archives, local Catholic parishes, Houghton County cemeteries, and the branch Family History Libraries of the Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (the Mormons). The Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library, the Grand Rapids Public Library, and the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana, are also important research sites. I shall deal with the record depositories in Houghton County and will only make passing mention of the other locations.

A warning is in order at this point. Although much research can be done through correspondence, to use these records to their maximum potential a visit to the Copper Country is essential. You should plan your research trip to Houghton County carefully. Always call ahead to make sure that the office, library, or church you want to visit will be open. It is a beautiful but long trip to the Copper Country. Do not spoil it when you find out that you can not use a facility because it is closed for spring break, for repairs, or because of rule changes.

The next article in this series will discuss the records available in the Houghton County courthouse. For the French-Canadian family historian this is a treasure house of vital records and should be visited first.

(to be continued)



#### R I C E   P U D D I N G

- 1/2 Cup raw (uncooked) rice
- 1/3 Cup sugar
- 4 Cups of milk
- 1/2 Teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 Cup raisins

Add the rice, sugar, nutmeg, milk and raisins to a casserole dish. Bake in a 400 degree oven for half an hour, then lower the heat to 350 degrees till done or about 1 1/2 hours. Stir once.

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Submitted by Mrs. Isabelle M. Monette, mother of FCHSM member Clarence Monette.

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# **HABITANT HERITAGE**



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**French-Canadian Genealogical Research in  
Houghton County, Michigan**

John P. DuLong, Ph.D.

**Part II: Houghton County Courthouse**

The county courthouse is located at 401 E. Houghton, Houghton, MI 49931. The phone number is (906) 482-1150. The building is an impressive Victorian structure on top of a steep hill overlooking Portage Lake. It was built between 1886 and 1887. There is parking available in the front. Hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 4:30pm. The County Clerk's Office prefers researchers to come Tuesday through Thursday. Written requests for birth, marriage, divorce, and death records are charged a basic \$5.00 fee for a three year search and a \$1.00 for each additional year. A certified copy is sent if a record is found and the fee is kept regardless of the success of the search.

Houghton County was created in 1845 and organized in 1846. The village of Houghton became the county seat in 1852. Both the county and the village were named for Dr. Douglas Houghton. He was the State Geologist of Michigan whose explorations prompted the mining of copper in the region. The county was formed from Marquette and Ontonagon Counties. Keweenaw County was drawn from Houghton County in 1861 and Baraga County was separated from it in 1875.<sup>1</sup> The county now consists of fourteen townships and five incorporated villages.

The County Clerk's Office holds most of the records of interest for family historians. This office is on the first floor of the east wing. You should call ahead for an appointment, otherwise, it is on a first-come-first-serve basis. Like any archives, you should only use a pencil while working in the courthouse. Due to limited staff and space the courthouse has established the following rules: (1) only one person at a time will be permitted to search records; (2) only one book at a time may be used; (3) extreme care must be used at all time because the books are fragile; (4) office employees must be given books when requested; (5) books must be returned to the County Clerk's Office no later than 4:20pm; and (6) no smoking, eating, or drinking while using records. Lastly, posted on brass plaques throughout the building is the following admonition:

**DO NOT  
SCRATCH MATCHES  
ON WALLS OR WOODWORK**

The Clerk's Office has a well-preserved set of vital records for the County. These include births, delayed registration of births, marriages, divorces, and deaths. The indexes available for these records are not strictly in alphabetical order. They are organized by the first letter of the surname and then by the first following vowel. For example, Prince is listed under PI. Within each grouping the names appear chronologically.

**Birth:** The birth records are closed to the public. To get information from the birth records you must prove that you are an heir and pay a \$5.00 fee for a three year search. The staff must do the searching for you. Many of these records are also available through the Mormon branch Family History Library system. The birth records run from 1867 to the present, however, the index does not begin until 1893. The Mormons have microfilmed the birth records and index from their respective beginnings up to 1910. Delayed birth records also exist from 1931 to the present. These records deal with births that took place in the mid-1800's to the early 1900's but which were registered well after the births took place. The Mormons have also microfilmed these delayed birth records and an index that covers those registered from 1931 to 1976.

**Marriage and Divorce:** The marriage records range from 1848 to the present. Indexes are available for these records. Unfortunately, the early records do not record the name of the parents and many are less than accurate about other details. The Mormons microfilmed the marriage records and indexes from 1848 to 1912. The divorce records start around 1848 and go to the present. They are no longer kept in the County Clerk's

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<sup>1</sup>Carol McGinnis, Michigan Genealogy: Sources & Resources, (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1987), pp. 7, 16, & 13-14.

Office. These divorce records are now in the Circuit Court Clerk's Office. Divorce records are indexed with the other civil cases. The Mormons did not microfilm any of the divorce records.

**Deaths:** The death records range from 1867 to the present. However, the index does not start until 1911. Researchers can use the index, but the clerks are suppose to search the records. The Mormons only microfilmed the death records covering 1867 to 1910.

**Naturalization:** Intention and naturalization papers exist for the county from 1848 until the present. The papers contain very little information until 1906. Nevertheless, even the earlier papers have the date of the record and an ancestor's signature or mark. There are indexes for these records. There is also a separate index to naturalizations which occurred during local court proceedings. Be aware that few French-Canadians bothered to become citizens.<sup>2</sup>

**Township Vital Records:** Besides records that the state mandated be kept by the county, the courthouse also contains vital records which the townships generated. The townships use to maintain their own birth and death records and issue certificates. The state laws have changed and this no longer occurs. The township vital records for Duncan Township, Lake Linden Village, Osceola Township, and Franklin Township are now stored at the courthouse. They start in the early 1900's and go until at least the 1930's if not latter. Other township and village records might still exist and be at their local offices.

**Wills and Probate Records:** The Probate Court Office is now in the back remodelled section of the courthouse. The records of wills and probate proceedings start in 1872 and run to the present. According to the probate clerk, there is no index available until 1963. Individuals may not search through the records. To use them you must give the clerk the date of death and name of an ancestor. The clerk will then do the searching. The Mormons have microfilmed a "General Probate Index, 1872-1889" and a "Probate Calendar, 1881-1904." It is unclear as to what is contained on these microfilmed indexes.

**Land Records:** The Registrar's Office is across the hall from the County Clerk's Office. It contains records of deeds, mortgages, discharge of mortgages, land contracts, loans, financing statements, and bills of sale. You can view these records under supervision. The deeds start in 1848 and run to the present. A grantee and grantor (seller and buyer) index is available. The Mormons microfilmed the deed records from 1848 to 1886 and the index from to 1848 to 1931. The mortgages also start in 1848 and are indexed. The Mormons microfilmed the mortgages and index from 1848 to 1887. There is also a book of Sheriff's deeds which includes property that was auctioned off after foreclosures due to defaulting on loans. The Registrar's Office also contains maps to help you locate your ancestor's property. Do not be surprised if you fail to find any land records for your ancestor. Much of the housing in Houghton County was company housing provided by Calumet and Hecla (C&H), Quincy, or one of the other mining companies. The houses were rented and not purchased.

**Court Records:** The courthouse also contains judicial offices and their records. I am not sure what records of genealogical value they possess. Nor am I aware of any rules concerning their accessibility. If you find your ancestor in any legal trouble, then you might want to contact the local court for information about their records.

**Summary:** Besides these vital and property records the courthouse also has County Supervisors Proceedings since 1861 and Mine Inspector's Reports since 1889. The County Clerk's Office also has some military records relating to returning veterans from the Civil War to the present. These veterans records are indexed but closed to the public. Only the veteran or his heirs can have access to them.

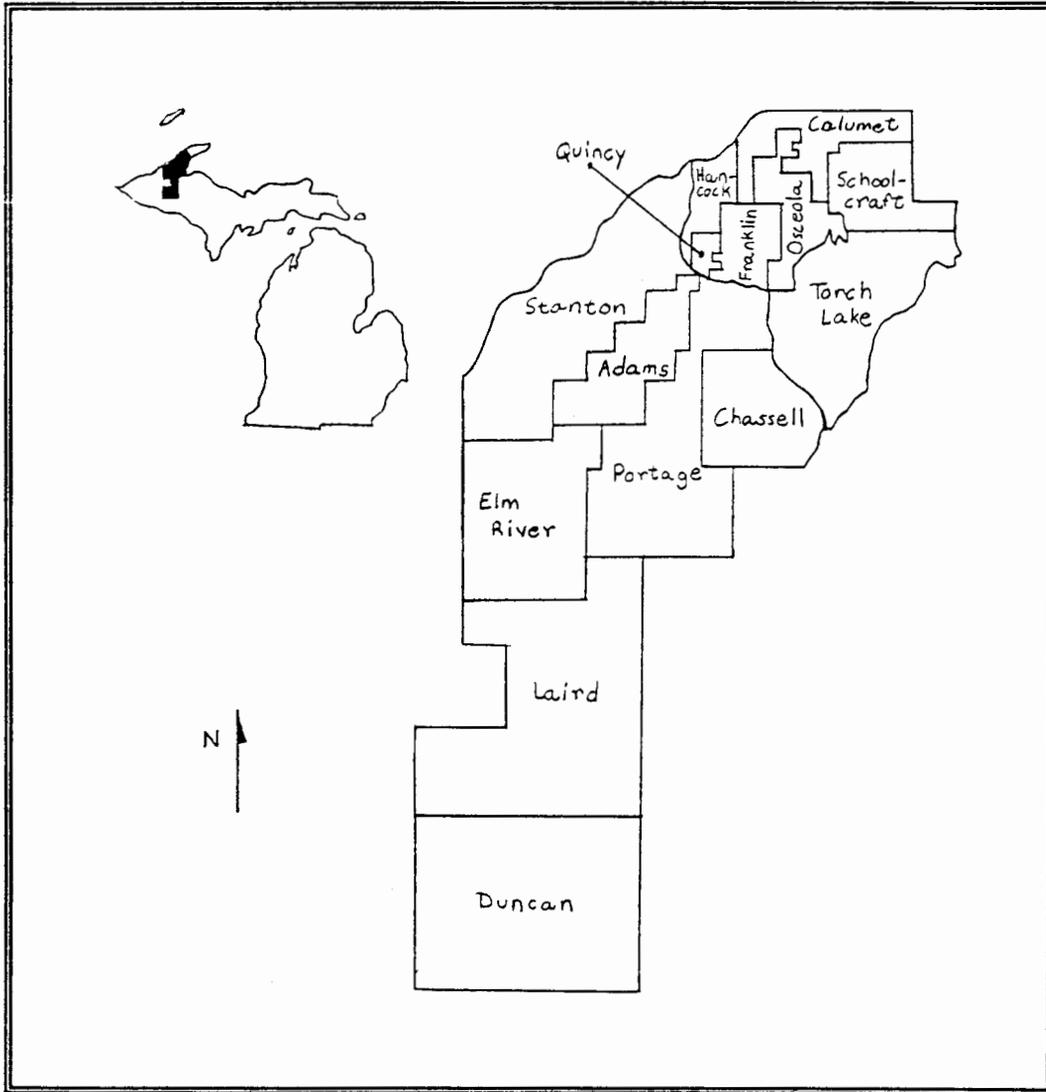
Because so many of Houghton County's records have survived you can not ignore the courthouse in your research. A visit to the courthouse first will usually give you a wealth of facts and clues you can follow-up on at the other research sites.

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<sup>2</sup>Barkan, "French Canadians," op. cit., p. 397. Although many French-Canadians never became American citizens, and a large number of them travelled back and forth between Québec and America, the repatriation movement never succeeded among the French-Canadians, see Donald Chaput, "Some *Repatriement* Dilemmas," Canadian Historical Review 44:4 (December 1968): 400-412.

The next article in this series will discuss the Copper Country Archives located at Michigan Technological University.<sup>3</sup>

### HOUGHTON COUNTY TOWNSHIP BOUNDARIES

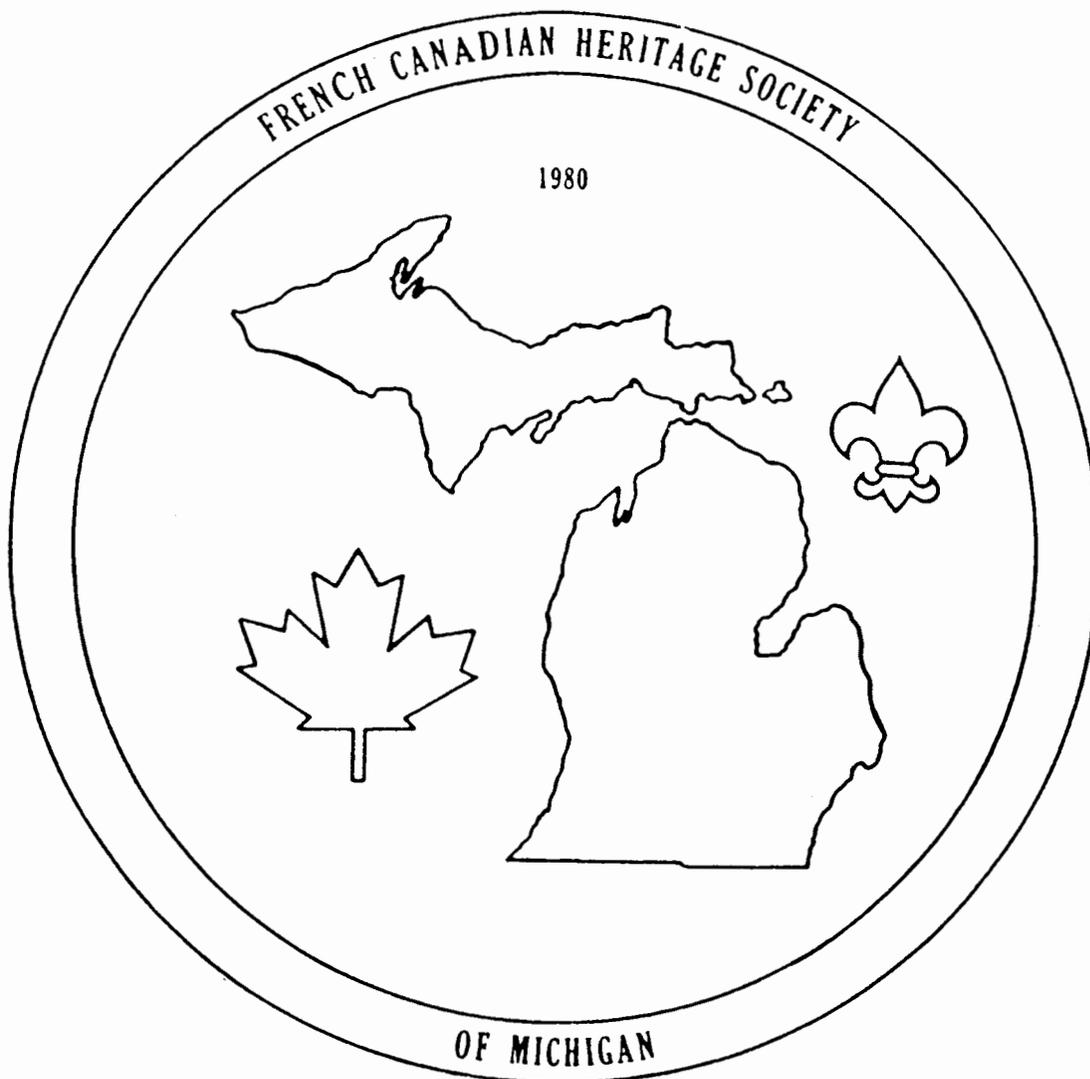


<sup>3</sup>As this paper is being prepared for publication I have just learned that many of the non-vital records at the courthouse will be transferred over to the Copper County Archives. Among the first batch to go will be court calendars and indexes from 1853-1949, circuit court case files from 1863-1949, and other miscellaneous local government documents from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries. Despite this important move of records, the courthouse will remain an important research site as long as it continues to hold the birth, marriage, divorce, death, probate, and land records.

(to be continued)

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# **HABITANT HERITAGE**



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## French-Canadian Genealogical Research in Houghton County, Michigan

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### Part III: Copper Country Archives

The courthouse covered in the last part of this series is an excellent record depository, but it was not established for researchers. In contrast, the Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collection, otherwise known as the Copper Country Archives, is devoted to historical researchers. It is located on the third floor of the Michigan Technological University Library, Houghton, MI 49931. The phone number is (906) 487-2505. Its hours are 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday through Friday during the regular school year and from 7:30am to 4:15pm during the Summer. It is closed during the Christmas holiday season.

This facility is well-equipped with machines for making photocopies and microform copies. There are several finding aids for the manuscript collections in black binders at the counter. There is also a card catalog for the published collection. A few of the books are on shelves in the reading room, but most of the collection is in closed stacks. The card catalogue for the whole library, including the archives, is also available through computer terminals on the first floor.

The Copper Country Archives contains a wide variety of sources which will interest a family historian. It has several valuable collections dealing with Isle Royale, photographs of the region and its people, papers dealing with Michigan Technological University, a special collection on Copper Country railroads, and annual reports of the copper mining companies.<sup>1</sup> It also has about a thousand cubic feet of records and maps from Calumet and Hecla Mining Company (C&H) and will soon be receiving the papers of the Quincy Mining Company. Furthermore, the collection deals with all three Copper Country counties (Houghton, Keweenaw, and Ontonagon), as well as many other areas in the western upper peninsula district.

For family historians the most valuable parts of the collection are the microfilmed newspapers and censuses, the city directories, the maps, the papers of the mining companies, the county records on deposit, and an extensive clippings file. The Copper Country Archives also contains many of the local community and parish histories mentioned in the bibliography to be printed at the end of this series.

**Newspapers:** Fortunately for family historians the Copper Country had a wide variety of newspapers. Moreover, the editors of these papers frequently published detailed obituaries, even for people with humble backgrounds. There are no surname indexes for any of these papers.

The following table lists the Houghton County newspapers available on microfilm in the Copper Country Archives.<sup>2</sup> The holding column indicates when and where the newspapers were published. The date ranges show the beginning and ending dates of the microfilm. In all most every case there are gaps in between these dates. In fact, only a handful of issues have survived from the French-Canadian L'Union Franco-Americaine and Le Courier du Michigan. None of the issues of Le Franc-Pionnier: Organe de la Population Française du Lac Supérieur, are still in existence.

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<sup>1</sup>Another important Upper Peninsula photographic collection is in the hands of Jack Deo, Superior View, 137 1/2 W. Washington, Marquette, MI 49855 (906) 225-1952. He is a professional photographer who specializes in Copper Country history. Unless your French-Canadian kin were famous, it is unlikely that he will have a picture of your ancestors. However, he will have pictures of the community they lived in, the mills they worked at, and meetings or parades of the organizations they belonged too.

<sup>2</sup>Bennet Kilpel, "Copper Country Newspapers: A History," Copper Country Anthem 4:4 (Fall 1979): 27-31. Michigan Newspapers on Microfilm (Lansing: Library of Michigan, 1986). Also see the "Newspaper" folder in the Copper Country Vertical File, Copper Country Archives. The Daily Mining Gazette maintains a morgue for their back issues and those of its predecessor the Portage Lake Mining Gazette. Researchers may use this collection during regular business hours Monday through Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm and on Saturday from 8:00am to noon. The office is located at 206 Sheldon Ave., Houghton, MI 49931-0368 (906) 482-1500.

### Houghton Country Newspapers

Title	Holdings
<u>Calumet and Red Jacket News</u>	22 February 1889 to 5 February 1892, weekly, Calumet.
<u>Calumet News</u>	23 October 1907 to 25 June 1938, daily, Calumet. Continuation of the <u>Copper Country Evening News</u> . It became the <u>Evening News Journal</u> .
<u>Copper Country Evening News</u>	Established 1892, 4 January 1896 to 22 October 1907, daily, Calumet. It was continued by the <u>Calumet News</u> .
<u>Copper Country News</u>	3 September 1959 to 24 September 1964.
<u>Copper Country Review</u>	December 1965 to May 1966.
<u>Copper Island Sentinel</u>	4 April 1978 to August 1986, weekly, Calumet.
<u>Copper Miner's Journal</u>	September 1981 to December 1982.
<u>Le Courier du Michigan</u>	Established 1912, December 1916 to 16 May 1956, monthly, Lake Linden. It was published in Lake Linden until 1920 when it was moved to Detroit. It ceased publication in 1957. Only a handful of scattered issues have survived to be microfilmed.
<u>Daily Mining Gazette</u>	2 October 1899 to 31 December 1986, daily, Houghton. Still in publication and the Copper Country's leading newspaper. The original Houghton newspaper was called the <u>Mining Gazette</u> , it became the <u>Portage Lake Mining Gazette</u> in 1859. This eventually became the <u>Daily Mining Gazette</u> in 1899. It merged with the Calumet <u>Evening News Journal</u> in 1943 and retained its title. The <u>Gazette</u> has its own morgue with bond copies of the newspaper in reportedly good condition. I am unsure of access to the morgue.
<u>Evening Journal</u>	6 June 1904 to 14 May 1909, daily, Hancock. Formerly the <u>Hancock Evening Journal</u> and changed to the <u>Hancock Evening Copper Journal</u> .
<u>Evening News Journal</u>	27 June 1938 to 1 May 1943, daily, Calumet. Continuation of the <u>Calumet News</u> .
<u>Hancock Evening Copper Journal</u>	Established 1909, 30 August 1909 to 6 June 1938, weekly, Hancock. Title changed from the <u>Hancock Evening Journal</u> .
<u>Hancock Evening Journal</u>	Founded 1884, 2 July 1901 to 4 June 1904, daily, Hancock. Title changed to the <u>Evening Journal</u> .
<u>Hancock Mining Herald</u>	11 February 1885 to 24 February 1886, Hancock.
<u>Michigan Copper Journal</u>	12 May 1891 to 29 July 1893, Hancock. Previously known as the <u>Hancock Mining Herald</u> . It became the <u>Semi-Weekly Copper Journal</u> .
<u>Miner's Bulletin</u>	From 14 August 1913 to 14 August 1914, weekly publication of the Western Federation of Miners created during the 1913 strike.

<u>Native Copper Times</u>	28 February 1893 to 26 May 1971, weekly, Lake Linden. Title changed from <u>Torch Lake Times</u> . A great source for French-Canadian families living in Lake Linden and nearby Hubbell.
<u>Portage Lake Herald</u>	Established 1884, 13 May 1884 to 28 January 1885, Hancock. It became the <u>Hancock Mining Herald</u> .
<u>Portage Lake Mining Gazette</u>	Started in 1859, 26 July 1862 to 28 October 1897, weekly, Houghton. It became the <u>Daily Mining Gazette</u> .
<u>Semi-Weekly Copper Journal</u>	22 March 1893 to December 1893, Hancock. It eventually became the <u>Hancock Evening Journal</u> .
<u>Sidnaw Journal</u>	From 1898 to 1900, weekly, only 17 February 1889 was microfilmed, Sidnaw.
<u>Sidnaw Record</u>	16 December 1889 to 31 March 1900, Sidnaw.
<u>Torch Lake Times</u>	Established 1882, 24 May 1887 to 21 February 1893, weekly, Lake Linden. Title changed to <u>Native Copper Times</u> . An excellent source for Lake Linden French-Canadians.
<u>Truth</u>	From 27 November 1913 to 28 July 1917, the newspaper of the anti-union Citizen's Alliance and a by-product of the 1913 strike.
<u>L'Union Franco-Americaine</u>	From 1889 to 1891, only the 24 June 1890 issue survived to be microfilmed, weekly, Lake Linden.
<u>Wage Slave</u>	20 March 1908 to 19 June 1908, weekly, socialist newspaper.

The Copper Country Archives also has on microfilm newspapers for the surrounding counties (Baraga, Gogebic, Keweenaw, Marquette, and Ontonagon) and technical journals on copper mining. Many of these newspapers are also available on microfilm at the Library of Michigan in Lansing.

In my own research I have found the obituaries of my Houghton County ancestors in the various Copper Country papers invaluable. The obituaries often mention their birthplace, exact birth date, year of immigration, employers, cause of death, funeral arrangements, and surviving family members. For example, the Daily Mining Gazette, 7 March 1917, p. 2, had an obituary for my great-grandfather, Henry Bourbonnais. This obituary reports that he was born in Coteau-du-Lac, Québec, on 21 March 1838. It states that he arrived in the Copper Country by boat in 1859 and that he worked as a lumberjack for the Quincy Mining Company. He returned to Québec that same year and came back to Houghton in April 1861. He became a carpenter and worked mostly for the Huron and Isle Royal Mining Company. The obituary also gives the maiden name of his wife, Stéphanie Monette, and the date of their marriage 1 October 1864. This is a wealth of information.

Once you find the obituary of an ancestor in a hometown newspaper try to find other notices in neighboring newspapers. When Henry Bourbonnais died in 1917, his obituary was published in the Houghton Daily Mining Gazette, the Calumet News, and the Hancock Evening Journal. Occasionally, a few days after an obituary appears a short piece about the funeral noting the names of relatives and friends who attended the service was printed. Like many other nineteenth century newspapers the gossip column might mention that a resident has left for a funeral or that relatives from out of town have arrived for a funeral.

Also, do not neglect marriage and anniversary coverage. For example, from the Daily Mining Gazette, 4 October 1914, p. 15, I learned that my grandmother attended the fiftieth wedding anniversary of her parents, Henry Bourbonnais and Stéphanie Monette. This article states that her father remembered trading with the Indians in the 1860's, carried mail on dog sleds in the winter, and assisting Fr. Jacker in his missionary work among the Indians.

Lastly, be aware that journalists are often in error. The piece on my ancestor's wedding anniversary records my grandmother, Julia Bourbonnais, as Mrs. William DuLong. However, she was married to Meo

DuLong. Despite these errors and the chance that not everyone will be lucky enough to find an obituary, you would be foolish to ignore this source of data.

**Census Records:** The Copper Country Archives has all the federal censuses for Houghton County from 1850 to 1910 except for the destroyed 1890 census.<sup>3</sup> No soundexes or other indexes are available at the archives. The censuses on microfilm are convenient, but the lack of indexes makes them less accessible. These census and their soundexes are also available at the Grand Rapids Public Library, the Library of Michigan, the Burton Historical Collection, and the Allen County Public Library. Also, the archives has microfilmed copies of the state censuses. Only the 1864 and 1874 state censuses have survived for Houghton County. They are also available at the Michigan State Archives and the Library of Michigan. Although all of these censuses are valuable genealogical tools, the 1900 federal census is especially worthwhile because it indicates when immigrants came to the United States.

**Directories:** The R. L. Polk Company of Detroit published several Houghton County directories of residents and businesses. The Copper Country Archives has copies of these Polk directories for the entire county for the following years: 1895-1896, 1897-1898, 1899-1900, 1901-1902, 1903-1904, 1905-1906, 1907-1908, 1910, 1912, and 1916-1917. The Polk directories went from covering the whole county to just the principal towns. As the towns became smaller with the decline of copper mining, fewer of them were included until the directories contained only Hancock, Houghton, and nearby Hurontown and Ripley. The Copper Country Archives has these partial directories for the following years: 1930, 1939, 1947-1948, 1973, 1975, 1976-1977, 1979, 1980, 1983, and 1985. The archives also has copies of the Michigan State Gazetteer and Business Directory for the years: 1863-1864, 1917-1918, and 1927-1928. Lastly, there is also a copy of A.H. Holland's Handbook and Guide to Hancock & Houghton, Michigan, 1887-1888. Many of these directories are also available at the Houghton County Museum in Lake Linden and at the Library of Michigan.

The Polk directories are useful tools to identify the residence of ancestors. You can then more easily locate them on land and census records. For ancestors involved in business, these directories provide some interesting insights, especially if your ancestor had an advertisement in the directory. Directories often provide a sketch of family connections by showing who else was living in the same household or nearby under the same surname. Lastly, the directories also list the leaders of the local mutual benefit societies, such as the Foresters and La Société St. Jean-Baptiste.

For French-Canadians the Copper Country Archives has an extremely valuable directory, a copy of the 1891 Le Guide Français des États-Unis, 3rd. edition. This is a business directory for all Franco-Americans and includes not only Michigan, but the rest of the Midwest and New England as well. If your French-Canadian ancestor was any kind of businessman or professional, then you will probably find him listed here. This directory is also valuable because it gives you an idea of the kinds of products and services your French-Canadian ancestors purchased. There are also several biographies included in this guide. Joseph Grégoire, the father of Houghton Country French-Canadians, has a biography in the guide as well as an advertisement for his lumber mill on the spine.

**Maps:** For family historians maps are always valuable tools, for Houghton County researchers they are essential because Houghton County is a mining region with many ghost towns and locations.<sup>4</sup> For example, according to family tradition my great-grandfather, Edouard DuLong, lived in a company house at Osceola, near Calumet, in the shadow of the Osceola Consolidated Mining Company's shaft number three. The shaft house was torn down years ago as were many of the neighboring company houses. Throughout their years of operation the various mining companies created maps of their properties. The Copper Country Archives has many of these maps in their collection. Among their map collection is a "Map of Osceola Service" which the Osceola

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<sup>3</sup>A fire destroyed most of the 1890 Federal census for all of the United States. However, fragments have survived. The Copper Country Archives does have the special enumeration made of Civil War veterans and their widows.

<sup>4</sup>In Copper Country vernacular, a location is an unincorporated neighborhood usually in the vicinity of a mine or mill. They were often short lived and frequently no longer appear on modern road maps. Some examples, would be Tamerack Mills location near Hubbell, the Florida location outside of Calumet, or Frenchtown location near Franklin Mine on top of Quincy Hill.

Consolidated Mining Company made in April 1923. This map clearly shows the landmark shaft house, the adjoining mine buildings, railroad tracks, roads, businesses, and residences including the home of my DuLong ancestor.

The Copper Country Archives also has the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for various villages in Houghton County from the 1880's to the 1920's. The Sanborn company drew these detailed maps for insurance purposes and therefore they show the most industrialized areas. However, they also include nearby residential areas. The maps show the size of the lots, the shapes of the buildings, and the locations of exterior stairways. If you want to know more about the railroad yard or stamp mill your ancestor worked in, then this is an excellent source. Again, many of the features shown in these maps have disappeared with time. The Sanborn maps located in the Copper Country Archives are originals and have notes on them as well as cut-out sections. Intact versions of these maps are available on microfilm at the Library of Michigan and the Burton Historical Collection.

Lastly, the Copper Country Archives has a wide variety of village, township, and tourism maps.

**Mining Company Records:** For several years the Copper Country Archives has been the home of the C&H documents. This collection contains the papers of other mining companies which eventually became part of the mighty C&H, for example, the Osceola Consolidated Mining Company. Many of these papers deal with the day-to-day operations of the copper industry. However, some are of great interest to family historians. Among these are papers dealing with employees. There are lists of special employees who received awards for long time service, documents relating to accidents and rescues, payroll records, and individual employment records.

The employment record contains a wealth of information including: the person's name, date and place of birth, residence, nationality, marital status, names of children and date of their birth, name of wife, names of parents, names of relatives working in Michigan copper mines, last employer, reason for leaving, physical description, placement and pay rate record within C&H, date and place of death, and after the 1913 strike, a signed oath that the employee is not connected with the Western Federation of Miners. These records are extremely valuable. However, they are rarely filled out completely. For example, the information about parents is seldom found on the records of older mine workers. Researchers are not allowed to go through these records. You must give the name of your ancestors to a staff member who will search for their records and bring them out to you.

The Quincy Mining Company kept similar but less detailed information about its employees. These records will hopefully be transferred to the Copper Country Archives. At this time they are not available to family history researchers.

Lastly, the archives holds Mine Inspector's Reports for Houghton County, Michigan, published since 1889. These detail accidents and deaths occurring in the mines with the names of the injured, witnesses, date and time, and results of the investigation. These reports are also available at the courthouse.<sup>5</sup>

**County Records:** Local government records which are no longer being used are now sent to the Copper Country Archives. Among these are tax rolls, assessment records, school board records, oaths of office, public work records, and voter lists. Not all villages and townships have deposited there records. Also, the time periods covered vary with record type. Several finding aids are available at the front desk to help you locate which records might be of interest to you.

By far the most intriguing local government item is the Houghton County Sheriff's Office, Jail Records, 1874-1963, 14 vols., RG 77-105, Lot 4. The volumes from 1909 to 1963 are indexed. Curiously, the years near the great strike, 1913-1917, are missing. Microfilm copies of the jail house books are also available at the

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<sup>5</sup>For a discussion of these often fatal accidents see Larry D. Lankton, "Died in the Mines," Michigan History 67:6 (November-December 1983): 33-41.

Michigan State Archives.<sup>6</sup> I am fond of suggesting this as a possible source for information about your ancestor. If you find your ancestors here, then you will also discover the reasons for their arrest, date and time of arrest, place arrested, name of the arresting officer, physical description, sex, age, color, marital status, place of birth and parents' birthplace, occupation, literacy, and their temperament, (for example, if the sheriff considered the accused a drunkard). Finding an entry about your ancestor in the jail house book automatically sends you rushing back to the county courthouse to explore the outcome of your ancestor's arrest.

**Copper Country Vertical File:** The archives staff has done an excellent job clipping newspaper items and photocopying articles on a wide variety of topics relating to the Copper Country. The staff will retrieve these clippings from their file cabinet at your request.

**Local Histories:** The Copper Country Archives has a large collection of published histories about Houghton County and the copper mining industry. Among these are many local and parish histories that will be of interest to French-Canadian family historians. In the 1960's and 1970's many of the communities and parishes had centennial celebrations. These local histories often have pictures of early settlers and officials. Also, as of 1989, Clarence J. Monette, the resident local historian, has published over thirty booklets dealing with various Copper Country communities and topics. The bibliography at the end of this series will list many of these local histories of interest to French-Canadian family historians.

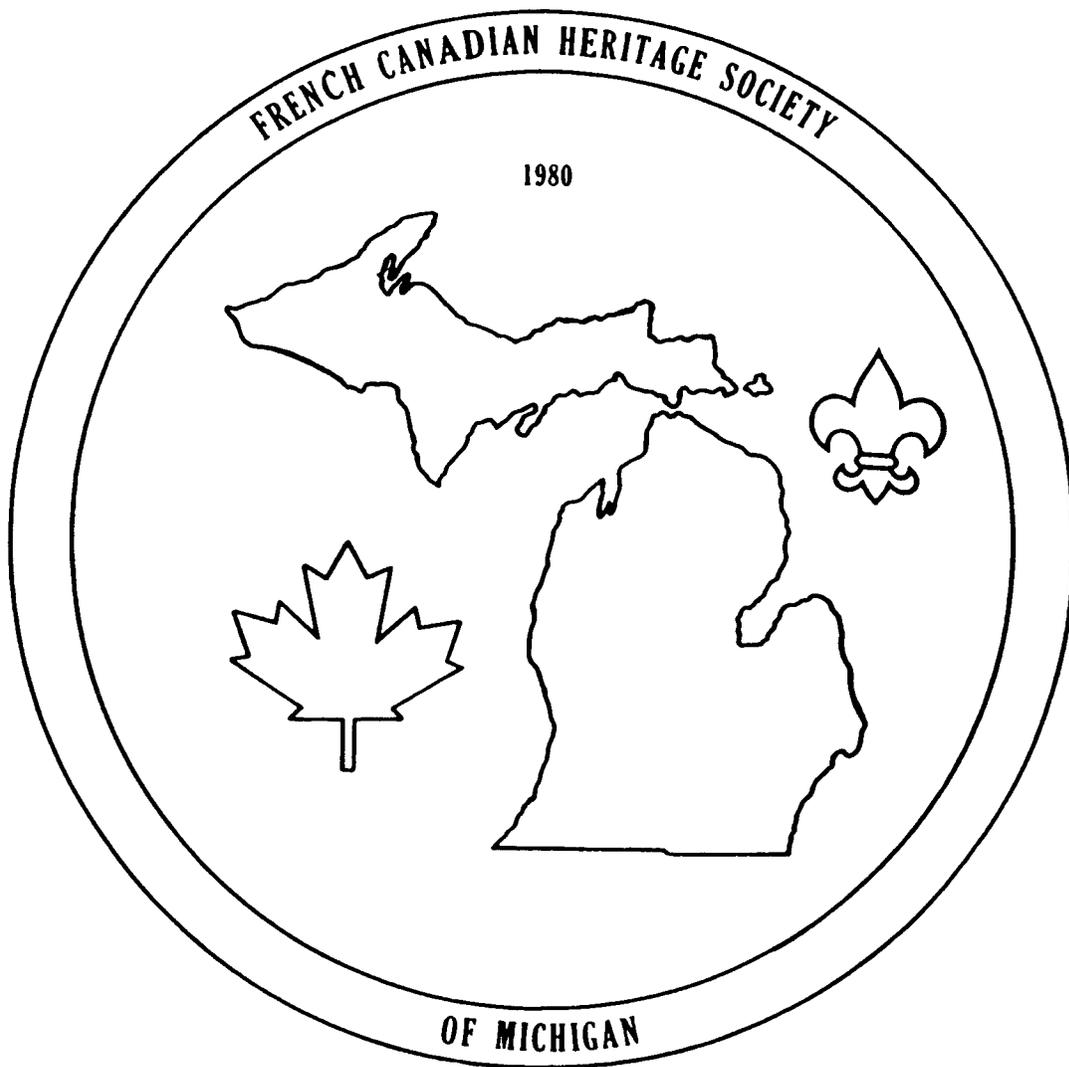
**Summary:** The Copper Country Archives is a great place for doing genealogical research in Houghton County. Michigan Technological University established the archives in 1966 for the purpose of maintaining records about the school. It has rapidly become a center for regional historical research. This collection has made genealogical research in Houghton County easy and pleasurable. Every visit I make to it I notice the improvements. Its major weak point is that it lacks vital records. However, you can find these in the nearby courthouse and in parish registers. Local Catholic church records and cemeteries will be covered in the next article in this series.

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<sup>6</sup>Michigan State Archives, Houghton County Sheriff, Jail Records, RG 77-105, reels 1510-1514. These five reels are available for purchase from the Michigan State Archives.

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# **HABITANT HERITAGE**



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## French-Canadian Genealogical Research in Houghton County, Michigan

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### Part IV: Roman Catholic Church Records and Cemeteries

French-Canadians are overwhelmingly Catholic. Due in part to apostasy among French-Canadians in Illinois, the Catholic hierarchy took an interest in encouraging French-Canadian parishes to maintain not only the French language and culture, but also their Catholic faith.<sup>1</sup> One of the top priorities for any French-Canadian community in the Copper Country was to set up its own ethnic parish. The French-Canadians achieved this goal as soon as possible in polyglot Calumet. French-Canadians also dominated the parishes in Lake Linden, Hubbell, Dollar Bay, and Chassell. However, in Houghton and Hancock they shared the parish with Irish, Germans, and others.

The priest and nuns for many of these French-Canadian parishes were from Québec or of French-Canadians ancestry. Masses were in French, the Catholic school nuns taught in French, and several French societies existed like the Foresters and St. Jean-Baptiste, as well as the Jeanne d'Arc club for girls and the Lafayette club for boys. Masses are no longer in French and many of the schools are now closed, but the parishes remain as reminders of the once thriving French-Canadian communities. The records of these parishes also still exist.

All Catholic parishes maintained records of baptism, communion, confirmation, marriage, and burial. Marriage and baptismal records contain the most valuable genealogical information. Burial records rarely show the name of parents or spouses and usually do not mention the cause of death. These records prove helpful in situations where the comparable civil vital records are missing or incomplete. Some parishes have these records indexed, but these are the exceptional ones. You should expect to find the information recorded in these registries in a mixture of Latin, French, English, or even German depending on the priest and the time period you are searching. The precision of the information recorded also varies with time and the officiating priest. A few parishes have printed centennial parish histories which mention ancestors, especially those prominent in parish affairs.

These registers are under the control of the local parish priest and he is under no obligation to allow you to search through them. Furthermore, their religious duties leave them little time to assist family historians. Despite these limitations, most priests will reply to written requests for specific information. Remember to include a donation to cover his service and a self-addressed and stamped envelope.<sup>2</sup>

The following information identifies the predominately French-Canadian parishes in Houghton County and provides details about their years of operation, location, and records.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>McQuillan, "French-Canadian Communities," op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>2</sup>For more information about access to parish records see my forthcoming article "French-Canadian Genealogical Research in American Roman Catholic Parish Records," Michigan's Habitant Heritage.

<sup>3</sup>The following parish vignettes are based on information from Msgr. Antoine (J.) Ivan Rezek, History of the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie and Marquette, (2 vols., Chicago: M. A. Donohue & Co., 1906-1907), vol. I, pp 249-301; The Official Catholic Directory, 1912 (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1912), pp. 516-521; The Official Catholic Directory, 1986 (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1986), pp. 496-499; St. Cecilia Parish, Hubbell, Michigan: Diamond Jubilee, 1893-1968 (no place or publisher, 1968); St. Ignatius Loyola Church, Houghton, Michigan: A Visitor's Guide (no place, publisher, or date); St. Joseph Church, Lake Linden, Michigan, 1871-1971 (no place or publisher, 1971); "The Parish Family Tree," Our Sunday Visitor: The Northern Michigan Edition XLII:18 (30 August 1953): 65A [lists parishes and dates established in the Diocese of Marquette]; Souvenir Booklet: The Catholic Church in the Hancock Area: 125th Jubilee, 4 August 1861 to 2-3 August 1986 (Hancock: Church of the Resurrection, 1986); as well as telephone interviews conducted with several local priests in August 1988 and a letter from the Very Rev. Howard J. Brown, V.F., Archivist-Historian, Diocese of Marquette, to John P. DuLong, 29 January 1983.

**Church of the Resurrection, Hancock:** All the Catholic parishes in Hancock were consolidated into the parish of Resurrection in 1976. The records for St. Anne's, St. Joseph's, St. Patrick's, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel are now kept at the modern parish of the Church of the Resurrection, 900 Quincy St., Hancock, MI 49930 (906) 482-0215. The public is allowed to view the registers which were rebound and all the parishes have been indexed. Specific written queries will also be answered.<sup>4</sup>

**Holy Trinity, Beacon Hill:** I know little about this church except that it was operating in 1912 and may have had several French-Canadian families in the area. Its records are now kept at St. Ignatius in Houghton.

**Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Franklin Mine:** This small parish was founded in 1910 and served many Italian, Irish, and Slavic families who worked for Quincy Mining Company. It was also the parish the French-Canadians of the Frenchtown location used. It closed in 1981 and became part of Resurrection parish in Hancock.

**Sacred Heart, Calumet:** This Calumet parish was not devoted to French-Canadians. However, it was the first Catholic parish in the Calumet area, established in 1868, and many early French-Canadian residents attended it until the creation of St. Louis. A few years ago a tragic fire destroyed the church and rectory. The parish registers survived the fire with only slight water damage. The registers are not open to the public. Parish volunteers will handle written requests for information. The new rebuilt church is located at the same site as the old one on US-41. The address of the rectory is P.O. Box 546, Calumet, MI 49913 (906) 337-0810.

**St. Anne, Calumet:** This parish no longer exists. It was created in 1901 and merged with several other Calumet parishes in 1966 to form the parish of St. Paul the Apostle. The records of St. Louis's and St. Anne's, as well as the other ethnic parishes, are now housed at St. Paul's which was formerly called St. Joseph's, the Slovene or Austrian church. The rectory of St. Paul's is located on Eighth St., Calumet, MI 49913 (906) 337-2044. Several years ago a surname card index for all the various parish registers was created and is kept at the rectory.

**St. Anne, Chassell:** The parish of St. Anne's in Chassell was established in 1890 for the benefit of the French-Canadian lumberjacks working the timber along the Sturgeon River system. The address is Chassell, MI 49916 (906) 523-4912.

**St. Anne, Hancock:** This was the parish the French-Canadians used between 1861 and 1884. In 1889 it became St. Patrick's an Irish parish. The French-Canadians switched over to nearby St. Joseph's.

**St. Anne, Redridge:** Known to be in operation in 1912. Like Holy Trinity in Beacon Hill, I do not know its date of creation or closing, nor the location of its records.

**St. Cecilia, Hubbell:** The parish of St. Cecilia's was created in 1893. It was an out growth of St. Joseph's parish in Lake Linden. The address is simply Hubbell, MI 49934 (906) 296-6971. These parishioners were predominately French-Canadian many of whom worked in the nearby Calumet and Hecla (C&H) stamp mills.

**St. Francis of Assisi, Dollar Bay:** This parish emerged from Lake Linden's in 1892. Its parishioners included Slovene, German, and Irish families, as well as French-Canadians. It is now operated as a mission. For several years it was under the care of the priests at Sacred Heart in Calumet. Currently, the priest at St. Cecilia's in Hubbell has care of both the mission and the parish register.

**St. Ignatius Loyola, Houghton:** This parish had a substantial French-Canadian population, but it also had many Irish and German parishioners. The rectory address is 305 Portage St., Houghton, MI 49931 (906) 482-0212. The parish was established in 1858. The records are well preserved and contain an unusual amount of information. For example, the burial record of my great-grandmother, Angeline Allie, shows that she was

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<sup>4</sup>Resurrection is built on the site of the Hancock Catholic Cemetery. The tombstones were removed and placed in a gully next to the church. They were subsequently buried to protect them from vandals. A list was made of the grave makers prior to the move and is kept in the parish office. Most of the surnames are Irish.

born at Baie-du-Febvre in Québec.<sup>5</sup> Detailed birthplace information is often provided in both the marriage and death records.

**St. Joseph, Hancock:** Most of the Catholics in Hancock were Irish, but, there were some French-Canadian families. This parish derived from St. Anne's and was created in 1885. It catered to the Germans and French-Canadians in town. In 1937 a fire destroyed St. Patrick's, the Irish church, and these parishioners then went to St. Joseph's which operated as a joint parish. St. Patrick's was officially merged under St. Joseph's in 1953. In 1976 St. Joseph's parish became Resurrection.

**St. Joseph, Lake Linden:** Lake Linden is the leading French-Canadian community in Houghton County and its parish is the most important one in the region for French-Canadian family historians. St. Joseph's rectory is located at 701 Calumet St., Lake Linden, MI 49945 (906) 296-6851. The parish was founded in 1871. Schoolcraft township now operates Mount Calvary the parish's former cemetery.

**St. Louis, Calumet:** This parish existed in Red Jacket, near Calumet, from about 1883 to 1901. It became the parish of St. Anne's. St. Louis's and St. Anne's were the French-Canadian parishes in Calumet.

There are many other Catholic parishes in Houghton County which may have been the home of your French-Canadian ancestors.<sup>6</sup> The ones discussed here had a majority of French-Canadian parishioners or at least a substantial minority. For information about the other parishes consult the most recent version of The Official Catholic Directory.<sup>7</sup> Be aware that this reference work only list ongoing parishes.

These Houghton County parishes are part of the Diocese of Marquette. The Diocese has an Office of Archivist-Historian, Ministry of Remembrance, St. Christopher Parish, 2372 Badger St., Marquette, MI 49855 (906) 226-2265. Several years ago the diocese microfilmed the existing parish registers and stored the copies in the diocesan office. These microfilmed parish registers are not indexed. This office is closed to public use. Nevertheless, specific written inquiries will be answered at a minimum charge (\$20.00 in 1983) to initiate a search. Should more time be required presumably an additional amount would be charged. This office has limited funds and staff which must be used on regular church business. Genealogical research will only be done as time permits.

## Cemeteries

There are at least twenty-seven cemeteries in Houghton County, but I only know of the following four with large concentrations of French-Canadian graves.<sup>8</sup> In general, these cemeteries are well groomed and the tombstones are in reasonable condition. I am sure of the existence of Sexton's records for only two of these cemeteries. Both Forest Hill and Lake View have excellent records. I suspect the others have also maintained records of the burial sites.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>St. Ignatius Loyola, Burial Register, vol. II, 1877-1923, pp. 46-47, 12 November 1891.

<sup>6</sup>In 1912 there were a total of eighteen operating parishes in Houghton County of which five were predominantly French-Canadian, six had a substantial number of French-Canadian parishioners, and the other seven were dedicated to other ethnic groups. See, The Official Catholic Directory, 1912, op. cit., pp. 517-520.

<sup>7</sup>Published annually since 1911 by P. J. Kennedy & Sons of New York, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup>Michigan Technological University Library, Copper Country Historical Collection, "Cemeteries of Houghton County," Kalamazoo Valley Family News Letter 5:4 (June 1976): 348-349. David H. Thomas, Cemeteries of the Copper Country (Houghton: Michigan Technological University, 1973).

<sup>9</sup>Clarence J. Monette has reminded me that funeral homes are another source of valuable information. Their records contain information about date and place of death, insurance, burial arrangements, family relationships, etc. The obituary often mentions the name of the funeral home. With this information and some telephone calls you should be able to track down the current owner of the funeral home. Access to

**Forest Hill:** This cemetery is located in Houghton on Upland Rd. in section 31 of Portage Township. The township owns the cemetery and there is a Sexton's office at the location. The records of the Sexton are in large ledgers and a surname card index is available. The address is Park Addition, Houghton, MI 49931 (906) 482-3580 or 482-4310.

**Lake View:** This cemetery is found just outside of Calumet on M-203 in Section 15 of Calumet Township. It is corporation owned and a Sexton's office is located at the entrance. Before 1920 the records are kept separately for Catholics and Protestants since the cemetery was divided between the two groups. The Detroit Society for Genealogical Research published information about burials between 1894 and 1899 in this cemetery.<sup>10</sup> The address is P.O. Box 544, Calumet, MI 49913 (906) 337-2510.

**Mount Calvary:** This cemetery formally belonged to St. Joseph's in Lake Linden. Schoolcraft Township now owns it. The location is on CR S-10, north of Lake Linden, in section 32. The earliest grave dates from 1876.

**Chassell Township Cemetery:** Located in section 32, the village of Chassell owns this cemetery.

This series concludes with the next article which will discuss how to take the data you collect from your Houghton County research and use it to find your ancestors in Québec.

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these records is entirely dependent upon the funeral director.

<sup>10</sup>Bertha Malone, "Lakeview Cemetery, Calumet, Michigan 1894-1899," Detroit Society for Genealogical Research Magazine 8:5 (May-June 1945): 125-126, 9:1 (September-October 1945): 23-26, 9:2 (November-December 1945): 49-52, 9:3 (January-February 1946): 79-82, 9:4 (March-April 1946): 105-108, and 9:5 (May-June 1946): 132-137.

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## French-Canadian Genealogical Research in Houghton County, Michigan

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### Part V: Conclusion and Bibliography

The aim of your genealogical research in Houghton County is to find information that will allow you to trace your ancestry back to Québec and eventually to France. To do this you must find at least one of two things. Either the birth date and place of an ancestor back in Québec or the full names of an ancestral couple married back in Québec as well as an approximate date for their marriage. With accurate birth information you can use standard vital records in Québec to trace your ancestry. If you only have the names of an immigrant couple who you suspect were married in Québec, then you can use the Loiselle Marriage Index. This index is organized by surname and covers most of Québec from about the seventeenth to the mid-twentieth century. It is available on microfilm through the branch Family History Library system of the Mormons. The French-Canadian Heritage Society of Michigan has arranged with the Lansing area Mormon Family History Library to borrow on a long-term basis most of the reels. The Burton Historical Collection in Detroit has recently acquired the Loiselle Marriage Index.

Another valuable set of tools are the published marriage repertoires. A repertoire is an indexed list of marriages for particular a parish. Most parishes across Québec now have a published repertoire. A few French-Canadian parishes in the United States have also been done, but unfortunately, none in the Copper Country. You will need to know your ancestor's place of marriage to use this resource. Nearly complete collections of these marriage repertoires can be found in the Burton Historical Collection and the Allen County Public Library. The Library of Michigan and the Grand Rapids Public Library also have a some repertoires. The finest collection of marriage repertoires in the Detroit area is at the library of the Société franco-ontarienne d'histoire et de généalogie near Windsor.<sup>1</sup>

Once you make a connection between a French-Canadian in Houghton County and his or her home in Québec you are on the right path for doing French-Canadian research. By using Houghton County vital records, parish registers, obituaries, and tombstones you should be able to find the information you need to pursue your ancestry into Québec. You will discover that the records back in Québec are well preserved and accessible. Using them will enable you to easily trace your lineage back to your seventeenth century French immigrant ancestors.

Despite the lack of a genealogical society or published genealogical works, Houghton County is an excellent area to do research in because so many records have survived, are indexed, and made accessible.<sup>2</sup> Because many records are now available locally or through the mail there is no absolute need to travel to the Copper Country to do research. Nevertheless, you must travel there at least once to smell the fresh air in Spring, see the hills above Houghton and Hancock alive with Fall colors, live through a five day blizzard in Winter, or enjoy a Summer's hot days and cool nights on Portage or Torch Lake. Only then will you understand this area's special appeal to your French-Canadian ancestors.

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<sup>1</sup>C.P. 1021, 267 rue Meunier, Belle Rivière, Ontario N0R 1A0. Volunteers staff this library and it has very limited hours. You should definitely call before making the trip to the library. The current director is Agathe Vaillancourt (519) 948-6924. Although non-members are allowed to use the library, the society strongly encourages you to join.

<sup>2</sup>There is a Houghton County Historical Society, M-26, Drawer D., Lake Linden, MI 49945 (906) 296-4121. It operates the local historical museum, has about 300 members, and publishes local histories. However, there is as yet no genealogical component. It is open from mid-June to mid-September.

## Bibliography

The following titles are works of interest to French-Canadian family historians in Houghton County. There is no published Houghton County history, but there are many local community and parish histories.<sup>3</sup> These are often the work of neighborhood historians who delight in mentioning the names of their family, friends, and acquaintances. You should not be surprised to find ancestors mentioned. Most of the local histories lack surname indexes. However, they are usually rather short and easy reading. A few of the works cited are more concerned with the whole Upper Peninsula and have few if any pages devoted to French-Canadians. Nevertheless, they are valuable guides to the history of your ancestor's period and the leading citizens of the various communities. This bibliography also contains a few works relating to the various mining companies and to the history of the Copper industry. I have annotated several of the citations, especially the more general historical ones. I suspect that most of these works are available in the Copper Country Archives, the Library of Michigan, the Grand Rapids Public Library, the Burton Historical Collection, or the Allen County Public Library.

"100 Years of Religious Growth, 1853-1953." Our Sunday Visitor: The Northern Michigan Edition XLII:18 (30 August 1953) 128 p.

This is a special edition devoted to recalling the history of all the parishes in the Diocese of Marquette including those in Houghton County. Several of the churches covered are no longer in operation. It is available at the Library of Michigan on microfilm F566.A665z, reel 17, item 6.

125 Anniversary St. Ignatius Loyola Church, 1859-1984. Houghton: St. Ignatius Loyola Church, 1984.

A 1976 Synopsis, Calumet Township, Calumet, Michigan. No place: No publisher, 1976.

Album - Souvenir, Saint-Jean-Baptiste, St. Joseph Parish. Lake Linden: No publisher, 1909.

Alexander, Eleanor. East Hancock. No place: No publisher, 1984.

Benedict, C. Harry. Red Metal: The Calumet and Hecla Story. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1952.

This is far from light reading. It is a technical history of C&H, the most important mining operation in the Copper Country. It is the only book published about C&H and deserves your attention if your ancestors worked for the firm. Otherwise, avoid it, since Benedict is more concerned with the bosses and equipment, than with the workers and their communities.

Bezotte, David, and Theresa J. Semmerling. St. Anne's Church, Chassell, Michigan, 1887-1987. Chassell: St. Anne's Centennial Committee, 1987.

The Copper Country Archives has a paper Bezotte did on this same topic for a Social Science course under Professor D. Halkola at Michigan Technological University in the Fall of 1975, see "History of St. Anne's Parish, Chassell, Michigan," typescript, 18 November 1975.

Biographical Sketches of Leading Citizens of Houghton, Baraga, and Marquette Counties, Michigan. Chicago: Biographical Publishing Company, 1903.

"Calumet & Hecla Mining Co.: Semi-Centennial Edition, 1866-1916." Keweenaw Miner, special issue, 15 July 1916.

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<sup>3</sup>Although a Houghton County history was never published, there was a proposed project to print one. The plan was to produce a five volume work organized as follows: (1) history of the county; (2) community, church, and school histories; (3) business histories; (4) family histories; and (5) a surname index. The publishers asked former and current residents to submit family histories for volume four. I am unsure of the fate of this project.

The Copper Island Sentinel reprinted this special issue in 1985. It contains many items of interest, including photographs and lists of employees who worked for C&H for twenty and fifty years and were awarded medals of recognition (see pp. 37, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 51, 53, & 79).

Calumet Township Centennial Committee. Calumet Township Centennial. 1866-1966. Souvenir Program. Calumet: No publisher, 1966.

Calumet Village Centennial Committee. Calumet Centennial Souvenir Book. Village of Calumet. 1875-1975. Calumet: No publisher, 1975.

Chaput, Donald. The Cliff: America's First Great Copper Mine. Kalamazoo: Sequoia Press, 1971.

This deals with the early history of the Copper Country and concentrates on Keweenaw County.

\_\_\_\_\_. Hubbell: A Copper Country Village. Lansing: Privately printed, 1969. Reprint ed., Hancock: Houghton County Historical Society, 1986.

The Chassell Book: A Pictorial Survey of Chassell Township as it is Today. Chassell: J. Alain, PSJ Pix, 1984.

Dersch, Virginia Jonas. "Copper Mining in Northern Michigan: A Social History," Michigan History 61:4 (Winter 1977): 290-321.

For family historians this article is a good introduction to social life and customs in the Copper Country.

Dollar Bay, Michigan. 1887-1987. Dollar Bay: 100 Dollar Bay Centennial Committee, 1987.

Gates, William B., Jr. Michigan Copper and Boston Dollars. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1951.

This is a dry academic work. However, the chapter entitled "Labor and the Community in 1904" (pp. 93-115) is well worth reading for background.

History of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1883.

Houghton Centennial: Souvenir History and Program. No place: No publisher, 1961.

"Houghton County Michigan." The Kalamazoo Valley Family News Letter 5:4 (June 1976): 299-364.

The whole issue deals with genealogical research in Houghton County. Each township and the major villages are covered in detail. A similar issue was done for Keweenaw County in December 1976.

Lankton, Larry D., and Charles K. Hyde. Old Reliable: An Illustrated History of the Quincy Mining Company. Hancock: Quincy Mine Hoist Association, Inc., 1982.

Many French-Canadians were employed in the Quincy stamp mill in Mason just south of Hubbell. Besides covering the history of Quincy, this book provides the reader with a sense of how mining technology influenced the work and community patterns of your ancestors. Excellent drawings, photographs, and narrative brings the Copper Country alive for the reader.

Maki, Wilbert B. Visions of Houghton: Yesterday and Today. Calumet: Greenlee Printing Company, no date, ca. 1987.

Monette, Clarence J. A Brief List of Publications Pertaining to Copper Country History. Lake Linden: Privately printed, 1979.

Monette is a prolific writer of local Copper Country history. The above work is a bibliography of value to all researchers. The author concedes that it is now out of date and he hopes to revise and

publish it again soon. Below I have listed a few of his publications dealing with items of interest for French-Canadians.

\_\_\_\_\_. Early Red Jacket and Calumet. Lake Linden: Privately printed, 1988.

\_\_\_\_\_. Freda, Michigan, End of the Road. Lake Linden: Privately printed, 1989.

\_\_\_\_\_. Gregoryville: The History of a Hamlet Located Across from Lake Linden, Michigan. Lake Linden: Privately printed, 1974.

\_\_\_\_\_. Hancock, Michigan, Remembered. 2 vols., Lake Linden: Privately printed, 1982 & 1985.

The second volume deals with churches in Hancock.

\_\_\_\_\_. The History of Lake Linden, Michigan. Lake Linden: Privately printed, 1975.

Monette has also published a three volume series of photographs entitled Lake Linden's Yesterday: A Pictorial History.

\_\_\_\_\_. Lake Linden's Disastrous Fire of 1887. Lake Linden: Privately printed, 1988.

This fire destroyed two-thirds of the town. Monette has listed all the people who lost any property in the fire and identifies what they lost, its worth, and its location.

\_\_\_\_\_. Lake Linden's Living History. Lake Linden: Privately printed, 1985.

\_\_\_\_\_. Some Copper Country Names and Places. Lake Linden: Privately printed, 1975.

Murdoch, Angus. Boom Copper: The Story of the First U.S. Mining Boom. Reprint, Calumet: Privately printed, 1964.

This is a popular, but outdated and flawed, history of the Copper Country.

Noces d'or de la paroisse Saint-Joseph, Lake Linden, Michigan, 1871-1921. No place: No publisher, 1921.

A detailed history of this crucial parish with biographical sketches (often accompanied by a photograph) of the parish's priests, pioneers, and benefactors.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Franklin Mine, 1911-1961. No place: No publisher, 1961.

Rezek, Antoine (J.) Ivan. History of the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie and Marquette. 2 vols., Chicago: M. A. Donohue & Co., 1906-1907.

This work is of value to French-Canadian researchers because of the Catholic faith of their ancestors. Msgr. Rezek often identifies the key people who helped establish or maintain a parish.

Rockford Map Publishers. Atlas & Plat Book, Houghton County, Michigan. Sponsored by the Houghton County 4-H Council. Revised ed., Rockford, IL: Rockford Map Publishers, 1978.

I believe that more recent issues of this atlas have been printed. It clearly shows the location of all important features including township boundaries and sections, villages, roads, railroads, cemeteries, and land owners. For an earlier version see William J. Weston and C. F. Hancock, comps., Plat book of Houghton County, Michigan (Milwaukee, WI: Foust & Jungblut Map Makers, 1911).

Sacred Heart Church, Calumet, Michigan; 1868-1968. Calumet: No publisher, 1968.

Sacred Heart Church Golden Jubilee, 1968-1918. Calumet: Keweenaw Printing Co., 1919.

St. Anne's Church, Chassell, Michigan, Centennial 1887-1987. No place: No publisher, 1987.

St. Cecilia Parish, Hubbell, Michigan: Diamond Jubilee, 1893-1968. No place: No publisher, 1968.

St. Ignatius Loyola Church, Houghton, Michigan: A Visitor's Guide. No place: No publisher, No date.

St. Joseph Church, Lake Linden, Michigan, 1871-1971. No Place: No publisher, 1971.

St. Pierre, Téléphore, Histoire des Canadiens de Michigan et du comté d'Essex, Ontario. Montréal: Typographie de le Gazette, 1895.

For French-Canadians this is a particularly valuable work done by a former Lake Linden newspaper man. He discusses national societies, local parishes, and provides short biographies of prominent French-Canadians.

Sawyer, Alvah L. History of the Northern Peninsula of Michigan and Its People. 3 vols., Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1911.

Ruth Robbins Monteith, Chippewa Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, Iron Mountain, abstracted a surname index of this work in 1950. A typescript copy of this index is available in the Burton Historical Collection.

Smith, G. Walton. Schoolcraft Township Centennial: History of Schoolcraft Township and the Village of Lake Linden. No place: No publisher, 1966.

Souvenir Booklet: The Catholic Church in the Hancock Area, 125th Jubilee, 4 August 1861 to 2-3 August 1986. Hancock: Church of the Resurrection, 1986.

Turner, Arthur W. Calumet Copper and People: History of a Michigan Mining Community, 1864-1970. Hancock: Privately printed, 1974.

\_\_\_\_\_. Rebels on the Range: The Michigan Copper Miners' Strike of 1913-1914. Lake Linden: John H. Foster Press, 1984.

The 1913 strike was a turning point for all ethnic groups in the Copper Country. It is the critical event of Copper Country history. The strike has left divisions and wounds among the people which are still evident today.

Torch Lake Bi-Centennial Committee. Hubbell-Tamarack Mills: Torch Lake Area Bicentennial, 1776-1976. No place: No publisher, 1976.

Welcome to the Village of Laurium's 80th Anniversary, 1889-1969. Laurium: No publisher, 1969.

Yauch, Faye, and Clarence J. Monette. Village of Lake Linden, the Friendly Town, 100 Year Centennial 1885-1985. Lake Linden: no publisher, 1985.