

1                    ***Housing Locations —1890-1915***

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3     Housing occupied about twenty-five percent of the area included in the Calumet Unit (see  
4     Figure II-31, Calumet Period of Change Plan, 1890-1915). Many workers' homes were  
5     in close proximity to the industrial activities (an example is provided in Figure II-23).  
6     Images of housing locations during this period illustrate the importance of the residential  
7     landscape to the miner's families (see Figures II-43 through II-47). In addition to the  
8     home, several outbuildings and utilitarian uses were frequently associated with the sites.  
9     These included outhouses, smokehouses, sheds, pens and small barns for livestock.  
10    Many yards were completely fenced to protect gardens from wandering livestock, or in  
11    some cases, to keep livestock enclosed. Horizontal wood board fences were prevalent.  
12    Some locations included barns that were shared by two or four properties, located at the  
13    intersections of the lot lines. Residential roads were unpaved, and parking and driveways  
14    were not yet present.

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16    In contrast to the mine laborer's yard, the mine manager's home landscape clearly  
17    reflected the more refined and comfortable living conditions of the inhabitants. Miners'  
18    houses were modest and spare with practical landscapes that served functional needs.  
19    Managers had larger homes with indoor plumbing and manicured ornamental landscaped  
20    yards instead of the outhouses, livestock, wood piles, and vegetable plots found in mine  
21    laborers' yards. Even the fences, necessary elements surrounding properties throughout  
22    the Calumet Unit, differed in character from the mine laborer's home to the mine  
23    manager's home. An example of a manicured yard is seen at the Agassiz house,  
24    illustrated in Figure II-48. The discrepancy between the manager's and laborer's living  
25    conditions is clearly visible in the size, detailing, and conditions of the exteriors of the  
26    homes and associated yards.

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28    Beginning in the 1890s, a movement of progressivism changed the expectations of  
29    laborers in the United States. Workers began to desire and demand better living and  
30    working conditions. Throughout the country, improved housing conditions became the  
31    focus of many groups advocating for workers rights. In the Keweenaw, this was an  
32    extremely important issue, since the companies owned a large quantity of residences. By  
33    1898 C&H owned 1,000 dwellings and an equal number of employee-built houses stood  
34    on company land. The rents for C&H housing were considered very low compared to  
35    those in other mining districts.<sup>121</sup> In order to maintain the low cost, the company resisted  
36    installing amenities and improvements that would raise expenses. In a climate where  
37    long winters brought severe cold and massive snowfalls, many area residents tolerated  
38    living without indoor plumbing or electricity much longer than residents of many other  
39    communities in the country. Although most C&H houses had indoor faucets, only about  
40    one-third were connected to sewer lines, and fewer than that had indoor bathrooms  
41    installed.<sup>122</sup> At the same time, these amenities were available to selected individuals as

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<sup>121</sup> Lidfors, et., al., "National Register of Historic Places, Calumet Historic District," Section 8, 3.; Lankton, *Hollowed Ground*, 187-190; and Thurner, *Calumet Copper and People*, 44. Thurner indicates that C&H had invested nearly \$1,000,000 in the housing they owned and had trouble convincing stock holders to build enough housing for Calumet.

<sup>122</sup> Thurner, *Calumet Copper and People*, 44.

1 deemed appropriate by the company. The inconsistency in living conditions among  
2 Calumet area residents was one point of contention for workers. In addition to living  
3 conditions, fair compensation and worker safety were issues of conflict between the  
4 laborers and the company. As families pushed for improvements in their homes and  
5 workers sought improved safety and compensation, tensions between labor and the  
6 company increased.<sup>123</sup>

7  
8 For five dollars per year “ground rent,” employees could lease a 120 foot by 80 foot lot  
9 upon which they could build their own home. This appealed to many, despite the  
10 stipulation that upon leaving the employment of C&H the individual was required to  
11 vacate the land. Also, the company could ask lessees to leave if the ground became  
12 necessary for mining-related operations. A lessee could lose their house if they failed to  
13 pay taxes or assessments charged by the company. Finally, the company had the right to  
14 approve or deny the sale or transfer of the lease. Despite all of these drawbacks, many  
15 miners chose to build homes on company land, and nearly one thousand of these houses  
16 were built in a couple of years around 1891.<sup>124</sup>



19  
20 **Figure II - 43: Red Jacket Shaft Location, ca.1890.** (source: NPS, Keweenaw NHP,  
21 Andrew C. Curto Collection, Album 5, #043)

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<sup>123</sup> Lankton, *Hollowed Ground*, 187-190.

<sup>124</sup> Thurner, *Calumet Copper and People*, 44-45.



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2 **Figure II - 44: Detail from Red Jacket Shaft Location, ca.1890.** (source: NPS,  
3 Keweenaw NHP, Andrew C. Curto Collection, Album 5, #043)  
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6 **Figure II - 45: Housing Location near South Hecla viewed from the South Hecla**  
7 **smokestack, ca. 1890.** (source: NPS, Keweenaw NHP, Jack Foster Collection, Series II  
8 Assembled Albums (002), Book 23, #014)  
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1  
2 **Figure II - 46: Calumet looking north, 1893. Note the residential fences,**  
3 **outbuildings and lack of shared barns in this location.** (source: NPS, Keweenaw  
4 NHP, Jack Foster Collection, Series I (001), Sub-series A (C and H), Sub-series (01)  
5 Library, #023)  
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8 **Figure II - 47: Bridge Street in Swedetown and Calumet beyond, taken from water**  
9 **tower, 1903.** (source: NPS, Keweenaw NHP, Jack Foster Collection, Series I (001), Sub-  
10 series A (C and H), Sub-series (01) Library, #020)



1  
2 **Figure II - 48: Agassiz House and C&H Public Library, facing southwest, 1909,**  
3 **note the manicured lawns, paths, fences, and street trees.** (source: NPS, Keweenaw  
4 NHP, Jack Foster Collection, Series I (001), Sub-series A (C and H), Sub-series (01)  
5 Library, #237)  
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