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## **Mainari, Farmari, Lumperjäkki, Piika : “Ethnic Identity” and Earning a Living in the Keweenaw and Nickel Belts to 1930**

Peter Krats  
*Western University*, pkrats@uwo.ca

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Mainari, Farmari, Lumperjäkki, Piika, Träppari :  
"Ethnic Identity" and Earning a Living  
in the Keweenaw and Nickel Belts to 1930

Settings : Questions and Ideas

Earning one's sustenance in the Keweenaw Peninsula in Upper Michigan and the Nickel Basin surrounding Sudbury, Ontario presented many challenges, from dangerous work to corporate domination to the "boom and bust" staples-based economies. While the Keweenaw settler experience predates that of the Nickel Belt by some four decades, there were many parallels – Keweenaw's leading historian terms it a "long-lived frontier...kept being recycled or repeated."<sup>1</sup> This paper considers sustenance with an eye on economic identity: in short: who did what, where, and for how long in the Keweenaw and the Nickel Basin ? Did those patterns reflect expectations held by elites and employers, or did newcomers expect to earn their keep from a wider range of options ? Did local populations fight, appreciate, or succumb to expectations when "earning a living? While the last word on this issue awaits a much larger study, even a summary glance can inform both the scholar of resource settings and the ethnic historian about an important element of resource-based society.

Comparison of these settings, divided by the imagined yet powerful line separating Canada and the United States, provides a useful "lens" for this study. Looking across borders adds depth to the inquiry; as Victor Konrad argues, "borderlands... residents share more with each other than with members of their respective national cultures." Looking across borders thus provides insights into *both* the everyday and the exceptional, making it a very powerful analytical tool.<sup>2</sup> Did similar human and environmental settings produce common results ? Examination of these resource-industrial frontiers thus provides an opportunity to consider *identity* – both self-awareness, and how one is perceived.

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<sup>1</sup>Larry Lankton, *Beyond the Boundaries: Life and Landscape at the Lake Superior Copper Mines, 1840-1875* New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, 204-212; quote 210. His other works add depth; see below.

<sup>2</sup>Victor Konrad, "Common Edges: An Introduction to the Borderlands Anthology," in R. Lecker, ed., *Borderlands: Essays in Canadian-American Relations*. Toronto: ECW Press, 1991, viii. See also: Pekka Hämmäläinen and Benjamin Johnson, eds. *Major Problems in the History of North American Borderlands*. Boston: Wadsworth, 2012.

## Settings : Physical & Human

Both the Keweenaw and Nickel Belt featured rich natural settings with millennia of human activity although the shores of Lakes Huron and Superior drew significant settler society attention only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> Long-standing cultural continuity faced the European fur trade and missionary endeavour; American and Canadian administrators soon followed, upon assimilation.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and Wahnapietaeping First Nation in the Nickel Belt, and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community formed part of the context facing immigrants.

These newcomers were attracted not just by minerals but forest, field and fishery. Copper was especially tantalizing, firing “rushes” on both sides of the border.<sup>5</sup> The booms provided both local markets, and transportation options, for felling the white pine and other timber.<sup>6</sup> Both areas thus gained reputations as resource frontiers – “treasure chests” for the taking.<sup>7</sup>

The unrestrained environmental destruction was a “necessary” cost, or even a marker of

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<sup>3</sup>This paper’s focus precludes detailed comment upon the often racist circumstances faced by the *Anishinabek* in both nations. Starting points include: Kenneth C.A. Dawson, “Prehistory of the Interior Forest of Northern Ontario,” *Boreal Forest Adaptation*, ed., A. Theodore Steegman New York: Plenum Press, 1983, 55-84; Charles Bishop, *The Northern Ojibwa and the Fur Trade: An Historical and Ecological Study*. Toronto: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1974; George Quimby, *Indian Life in the Upper Great Lakes: 11,000 B.C. to A.D. 1800* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960; \_\_\_\_\_. *Indian Culture and European Trade Goods: the archaeology of the historic period in the western Great Lakes region*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966.

<sup>4</sup>Both administrations reflected views dating to British Indian Affairs administration. Detailed citations are beyond the reach of this paper. For to the Nickel Belt, see: James Morrison, “The Robinson Treaties of 1850: A Case Study Prepared for The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Treaty and Land Research Section,” 31 August 1996, CR-ROM, Ottawa: Libraxus, 1997.

<sup>5</sup>There is a very large literature on the Keweenaw: the best overview is Larry Lankton, *Hollowed Ground: Copper Mining and Community Building on Lake Superior, 1840s-1890s*. Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 2010. A brief introduction to the Canadian case is Dianne Newell, *Technology on the Frontier: Mining in Old Ontario*. Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1986, 59-60.

<sup>6</sup>Starting points for forestry history are: Theodore J. Karamanski, *Deep Woods Frontier: A History of Logging in Northern Michigan*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989 and Gwenda Hallsworth, “‘A Good Paying Business’: Lumbering on the North Shore of Lake Huron, 1850-1919 with Particular Reference to the Sudbury District,” M.A. Thesis, Laurentian University, 1983.

<sup>7</sup>Two overviews are: Arthur Thurner, *Strangers and Sojourners: A History of Michigan’s Keweenaw Peninsula*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994; Oiva Saarinen, *From Meteorite Impact to Constellation City: A Historical Geography of Greater Sudbury*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2013.

progress. It also offered options for newcomers; settlement options varied from the ephemeral – lumber camps and short lived mining sites – through the relative stability [though low returns] of local agriculture, to company towns dominated by powerful firms, notably Calumet & Hecla and Quincy Mining in Keweenaw, and Canadian Copper/International Nickel [INCO] or Mond Nickel around Sudbury. Corporate control reflected high capital operations quite different from the fluid contexts of precious metals mining. Corporate control sometimes meant better physical settings, but also challenged individual freedoms.<sup>8</sup>

#### Newcomer Settings: Attitudes and Policy

Newcomers to Keweenaw reflected the huge wave of immigration entering the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. “Good” immigrants were to “fit in;” the “melting pot” concept dated to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Keweenaw featured Cornishmen and, later, Americans in supervisory and technical roles. Many tasks were taken up by Irish, German and *Canadiens*; Finns, Italians, Croatians and other Eastern and Southern Europeans followed.<sup>9</sup> Local mining firms sought men who were good, *reliable* miners. Reliable implied indifference to unions, loyalty to the firm, and acceptance of the “profits must be made” ethos. *Harper’s* reported the firms’ moulding of “self-respecting American citizens” in the 1880s; three decades on, the *Engineering and Mining Journal* congratulated the corporations for killing unionism and building “out of foreigners, ignorant of

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<sup>8</sup>On Keweenaw: Lankton, *Hollowed Ground*; \_\_\_\_\_. *Beyond the Boundaries*; \_\_\_\_\_. *Cradle to Grave: Life, Work, and Death at the Lake Superior Copper Mines*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991; Alison K. Hoagland, *Mine Towns: Buildings for Workers in Michigan’s Copper Country*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010. On Sudbury’s history: Saarinen, *From Meteorite Impact to Constellation City*; Gilbert Stelter, “Community Development in Toronto’s Commercial Empire: The Industrial Towns of the Nickel Belt, 1883-1931,” *Laurentian University Review* Vol. 6, no.3, 1974, 3-54; Donald Dennie, *À l’ombre de l’Inco: étude de la transition d’une communauté canadienne-française de la région de Sudbury, 1890-1972*. Ottawa: Les Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, 2001. For detail on communities and more: Peter V. Krats, “The Sudbury Area to the Great Depression,” PhD. Thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1988.

<sup>9</sup>A succinct, definitive dismissal of the melting pot in Keweenaw : Larry Lankton, “American Themes/Keweenaw Stories,” *New Perspectives on Michigan’s Copper Country*. Hancock: Quincy Mine Hoist Association, 2007, 15-16.

Anglo-Saxon institutions, citizens that any community can well be proud of."<sup>10</sup>

In Canada, assimilation aimed at sustaining British ways, with immigrants assessed on arbitrary criteria ranging from lifestyle to political views.<sup>11</sup> But practicality could win out: "undesirable" immigrants did work that "Canadians" were loath to provide. Mine labour was especially sought: Canadian mining expert A.P. Coleman remarked "Canadians won't work in the mines. They are quite willing to boss the job but they are not going to do the rough work ....It is the rarest of things in the records of the mine, unless you get a list of bosses and mine engineers, to find an English name."<sup>12</sup> Ethnic heterogeneity was unmistakable: various "experts" reported the Nickel Belt mining force was from fifty to seventy-five percent "foreign".<sup>13</sup> In 1917, Royal Ontario Nickel Commission accepted local convention (more on flaws in these views later in the paper) and magisterially concluded:

The labour in the [Sudbury] district is principally foreign, probably not more than 25 per cent being Canadian or American. The more skilled workmen, such as foremen, mechanics and carpenters, are Canadian or American. Underground, the drill runners and helpers are principally Finns and Austrians; the trammers are generally Poles, Italians, Austrians and Russians.<sup>14</sup>

As we shall see, such brave generalizations are suspect, albeit part of local tradition in both areas.

Ethnicity and Location:

Ethnicity did matter: given "quasi-urban" resource-extraction settings, "townscapes" featured numerous immigrant quarters. At times, these patterns were corporate made: the Copper Range

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<sup>10</sup>Cited in Lankton., *Cradle to Grave*, 144.

<sup>11</sup>On policy: Ninette Kelley and Michael Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1998.

<sup>12</sup>A.P. Coleman, "Ontario Mines and Miners,: *Empire Club of Canada Addresses* ( 1910-11) <http://speeches.empireclub.org/62329/data?n=10> Accessed September 22, 2013.

<sup>13</sup>E.T. Corkill testimony, Toronto, 27 October 1911, Ontario, "Interim Report on Laws Relating to the Liability of Employers to Make Compensation to their Employees for Injuries received in the course of their employment," *Sessional Papers* (1912), no. 65, 166.

<sup>14</sup>Ontario, *Report of the Royal Ontario Nickel Commission*, Toronto, 1917, 225.

Company and other local firms allocated housing resources to "good" workers of the "right" ethnic sort.<sup>15</sup> "Proper" behaviour was awarded – churches were aided, and various firms – Calumet & Hecla for instance – funded education. The latter not only taught immigrant children "American ways;" the introduction of vocational training gave students skills the company wanted.<sup>16</sup> As Superintendent James MacNaughton put it, "We would rather make American citizens of these people in our own way than have anyone else do it." For MacNaughton, assimilation was a tool to keep his workforce "industrious, and compliant."<sup>17</sup>

Education and other corporate paternalism, like harsher forms of control, was muted because those in charge got the lion's share of the benefits.<sup>18</sup> In Copper Cliff and other Sudbury area mining sites, "Englishtown", with its planned housing, was reserved for "skilled" labour and administrators, who were overwhelmingly Anglo-Saxon.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, in Keweenaw, Cornish and American workers were significantly over-represented as tenants in company houses – in Painesdale, for instance, some sixty percent more than their numbers might suggest.<sup>20</sup> Copper Cliff's "foreigners", meanwhile, often lived in ramshackle communities like "Crow's Nest" (Italian) and "Shantytown" (Finns, Ukrainians, Poles and others).<sup>21</sup> Some of Mond Nickel's communities – North Star, Kirkwood, Mond, Worthington – disappeared as ore bodies were depleted. Mond, the firm's first camp, was a crude

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<sup>15</sup>Lankton, *Hollowed Ground*, 164-165.

<sup>16</sup>Library facilities played a rather similar role. Lankton, *Cradle to Grave*, 171,174.

<sup>17</sup>Quoted in Lankton. *Cradle to Grave*, 211.

<sup>18</sup>Lankton, *Cradle to Grave*. 151.

<sup>19</sup>The most detailed work is Eileen Goltz, "The Exercise of Power in a Company Town: Copper Cliff, 1886-1980," Phd. Thesis, University of Guelph, 1989. see esp.92-94.

<sup>20</sup>39.Hoagland. *Mine Towns*, 39.

<sup>21</sup>See Goltz, "The Exercise of Power"; for a good map: Stacey R. Zembreski. "Memory, Identity and the Challenge of Community Among Ukrainians in the Sudbury Region, 1901-1939," Phd. Thesis, Carleton University, 2007, 29.

camp of ninety or so rough hewn buildings on haphazardly intersecting dirt streets; it slowly disappeared as ore production declined. Garson and Levack, in contrast, had larger ore bodies, and thus grew into sites featuring a blend of new, comparatively well serviced housing and older, often "hopeless, shackly, unpainted" quarters. These rougher private dwellings were immigrant sites home to Poles, Finns and Ukrainians.

Matters changed in the 1920s, given improved travel options and new corporate policy -- INCO restricted the housing supply in Copper Cliff, while the new British American Nickel Corporation opted against having a company town. Miners and smeltermen quickly opted for the greater services and freedoms available in Sudbury. The influx of mineral workers quadrupled the town's "foreign" population to 1,174 persons, most of whom settled in fast-emerging ethnic quarters on its northeastern and western fringes. Sudbury's newly enlarged and diversified population reached 18,518 in 1931; persons of British (36.6 percent) and French (35.9) origins still dominated, but there was a new "European" flavour (24.9), with Finns, Ukrainians, Italians, Poles and Germans most evident through ethnic enclaves.

Yet it would be wrong to focus solely on "urban" settings: in both the Nickel Range and the Keweenaw, Finns, Poles, Ukrainians, French Canadians and others sought small acreages (both manageable and affordable); their neighbours were likely of a similar background. These rural settings were, in their own right, ethnic enclaves where the comparative isolation sustained identity more thoroughly than in the town setting.<sup>22</sup>

Ethnicity and Institutions:

Location alone, then, was a highly variable factor in moving from immigrant to ethnic to citizen. It was more often the institutions present (or lacking) that made the difference. Family

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<sup>22</sup>For maps of "Finn" settings: Oiva Saarinen, *Between A Rock and a Hard Place: A Historical Geography of the Finns in the Sudbury Area*. Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1999, pp.48, 72, 76, 85, 88, 94, 95.

provided not just love and sustenance, but was often a profound factor in shaping one's identity. While many immigrants shifted along the spectrum running from immigrant to citizen, many retained earlier identities. Generations of immigrant mothers, for instance, recognized that their children lived in a "new" place, but never let them forget "who they were." Together, family and ethnic institutions, broadly defined, became fundamental components of both the Nickel Belt and the Keweenaw.

Family settings also generated extra income: boarding houses were an obvious example, but home gardens, laundries and more added to the list. Copper Cliff featured Croatian, Finnish, "Galacian," and other boarding houses; the largest "British" facilities were home to seventy men. Even more exclusive "Anglo" boarders enjoyed company facilities. Boarding, thus housing reflected more than birthplace, but remained closely linked to ethnicity.

Boarders, of course, were influenced by other issues – ethnic quarters were rife with divisions over religion, politics, labour issues and so in. Ethnicity mattered, but it did not "trump" all other factors. As Alison Hoagland puts it:

While each nation's immigrants remained separate by speaking their own language, living in houses together, worshipping at their own churches, publishing their own newspapers, and forming their own fraternal organizations, their self-segregation was not absolute. They also crossed boundaries to find common cause. Finns, Italians, and Eastern Europeans lived in the same neighborhoods and united to form the core of the union. Companies tended to view these more recent immigrants as the same.... yet [e]thnicity divided and united in equal measure.<sup>23</sup>

Dividing and uniting were also commonplace in the Nickel Belt. One could attend ethnic dances, plays, or celebrations; ethnic newspapers emerged, with some flourishing. By 1930, the Nickel Belt was home to British and *Canadien* institutions like the Sons of England, the Sudbury Caledonian Society, the Orange Order, and the St. Jean Baptiste Society. Chinese, Croatian, Italian, Jewish, Polish, Serbian, Slovak and Yugoslav societies took their roles. Local Ukrainians and Finns

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<sup>23</sup>Hoagland, *Mine Towns*, xviii.



offered societies running the gamut from Finnish IWW locals to the rightist Ukrainian Hetman Organization, which sought to restore Ukrainian independence under the historic monarch or hetman. Many institutions were very public, others less obvious: many “blind pigs” had specific ethnic character; even prostitution could be somewhat ethnic-focussed.

These last activities drew many customers; indeed, institutional success relied on the provision of practical and social services in the language and style familiar from one’s homeland. Many works emphasize *division* between immigrants, yet even perfunctory perusal of organizational records shows pragmatism – “hall” socialism is the best known, but hall religionism is an equally valid example – was crucial.<sup>24</sup> Early Nickel Belt groups like a Finnish co-operative cattle insurance effort and the Italian Benefit Association foreshadowed growing interest among Finns, Italians, Ukrainians and other immigrants in establishing producers' and consumers' co-operatives.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, dances and sporting events drew huge support; political and theological discussion drew sparse attendance. The committed minority complained that practical or “fun” services too often attracted attention: a *Vapaus* correspondent described events at Long Lake, just south of Sudbury, in 1922:

membership figures have gone down at dizzying speed.... Everyone blames the high membership fees and especially the extra taxes... [as a hobbyhorse on which they lean as a pretext to leave themselves out of mass action].<sup>26</sup>

As around Sudbury, institutional options challenged assimilation in the Keweenaw. When pressure to conform was applied,

ethnic groups experienced the often-conflicting process of "Americanization" and the pressure of Anglo-conformity while simultaneously struggling to retain their ethnic

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<sup>24</sup>For an extended argument on pragmatism versus principle, see my “Limited Loyalties: The Sudbury, Canada Finns and Their Institutions, 1887-1935,” *Finns in North America: Proceedings of Finn Forum III*, eds. M.G. Karni, O. Koivukangas, E. Laine, Turku, Institute of Migration, 1988.

<sup>25</sup>“Yhtyny Lehmaa Yhristyks” [sic] [Unified Cow Effort] File, 1900-1907, Anderson Museum, Walden, Ontario. On Italians: *Sudbury Journal*, 4 January 1912; Maurizio Visentin, “The Italians of Sudbury,” *Polyphony* 5 (1, 1983): 32.

<sup>26</sup>*Vapaus*, 17 June 1922. Long Lake is a little southwest of Sudbury.

identity... Difference can often be clarified through cultural tags - language, music, dress, cuisine, newspapers, political and fraternal organizations, and religion.<sup>27</sup>

As early services like British-American fraternal groups lost ground, ethnic institutions of every sort emerged among not just the bigger groups – Finnish, Italian, Croatian – but also Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Swedish, Slovenian, and more. Ideologically driven work stood alongside dances, music, and theatre. Bands, plays, concerts and more drew participants from various backgrounds; drinking spots competed with temperance efforts for attention. Mutual aid societies (the Italian Mutual Benefit Society or the German *Unterstützungs Verein*) provided aid in difficult times; so too co-operatives and fraternal societies. Newspapers played practical roles while supporting “ideals” even as many churches and political institutions emerged, sometimes with shared memberships, sometimes limited to one ethnicity, sometimes representing just one faction of an ethnic group.<sup>28</sup>

#### Working, Workplace and Identity

Identity and ethnicity, clearly, was a site of social-culture struggle: a key battleground in this struggle was the economic arena, notably but not exclusively the resource workplace. There, English was the “official” language; however, even this basic notion was challenged – various languages were heard in the mines and smelters, not least in the sharing of curses !

Shared curses were often directed at narrowly-based, sometimes volatile economies, internal divisions and, most importantly, intolerant local and corporate elites. Thus, while practicality and fun matters, ideas, too, were important to the ethnic experience. With the “proper” limits of labour-political activity defined by elites, politics and ideology were closely linked to pressures arising from hard lives and harder workplaces. Unified complaints saw ethnic solidarity translated into worker

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<sup>27</sup>[http://ethnicity.lib.mtu.edu/scene\\_overview.html](http://ethnicity.lib.mtu.edu/scene_overview.html) Accessed September 9, 2013.

<sup>28</sup>Various group efforts are summarized in Michigan Technological University and Copper Country Historical Collections. “An Interior Ellis Island: Ethnic Diversity and the peopling of Michigan’s Copper Country,” <http://ethnicity.lib.mtu.edu/index.html> Accessed September 9, 2013.

solidarity. Labour unrest had a long history in the Sudbury region, dating from an 1830s fur trade "mutiny" against the Hudson's Bay Company; unrest by timbermen and railway "navvies" in the 1880s encouraged more formal effort.<sup>29</sup> When Canadian labour organizations hesitated, the Nickel Belt hosted American activists from the Knights of Labor and, in turn, the American Federation of Labor.<sup>30</sup> The next wave of unions were virtually ethnic organizations: the Lumbermen's and Labourers' Federal Labour Union no. 8 and the IWW, for example, found Finnish immigrants in the Nickel Belt "a fertile soil in which to sow its own ideas." Later on, IWW efforts faced competition from Communist organizers; most members on each side were Finnish or Ukrainian.<sup>31</sup>

That labour organizations coalesced in separate "ethnic sections" reflected strong corporate control, the "boom and bust" resource economy, and an ethnically mixed labour force. The last was no accident, according to *Harper's Magazine*:

Mining companies usually prefer this mixture of nationalities, as a security against strikes...a preventive against unlawful combinations of labor since the building of the Tower of Babel. The tie which binds wage-earning men together is readily unloosed by race jealousies. A miners' union in thirteen languages is impossible.<sup>32</sup>

By the new century, Houghton County was home to peoples from across Europe (with a few from other continents).

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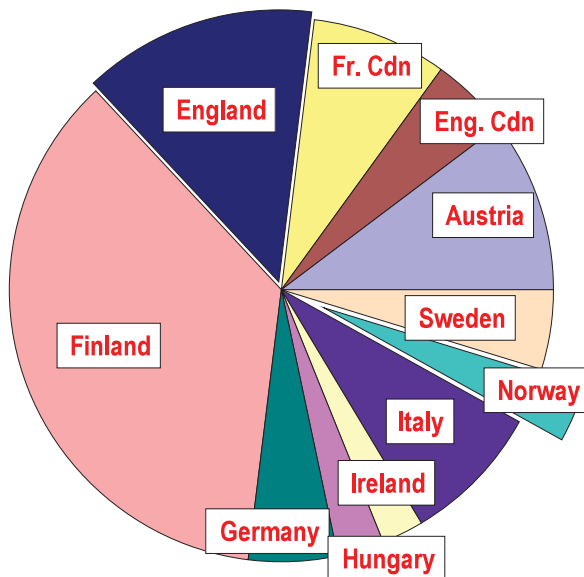
<sup>29</sup>Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany 1670-1870*. Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975, 218-219. On lumbermen: *Toronto Mail*, 7,8,9,10,11,17 May 1889. On navvies: *Toronto World*, 21 August 1883; *Globe*, 16 June 1883, 14 May 1884, *Owen Sound Advertiser*, 14 April 1887; *Fort William Journal*, 14 April 1887.

<sup>30</sup>Greg Kealey and Bryan Palmer, *Dreaming of What Might Be: The Knights of Labor in Ontario, 1880-1920*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982, 59. Canada, *Labour Organization* (1917): 220, reports the presence of lumber union Local no.15424 of the American Federation of Labor.

<sup>31</sup>*Sudbury Star*, 5 May 1917, 17 May 1919, 2 April 1931; *Vapaus*, 7 March, 26 October 1922.

<sup>32</sup>*Harper's Magazine*, 64 (May, 1882) :899.

### Foreign Born 1910 Houghton Cty.

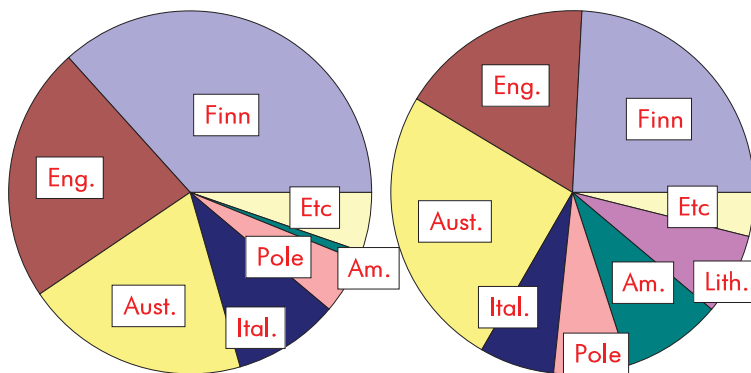


Miners were an especially heterogenous lot:<sup>33</sup>

### Champion Mine 1905/12 Payroll by Ethnicity

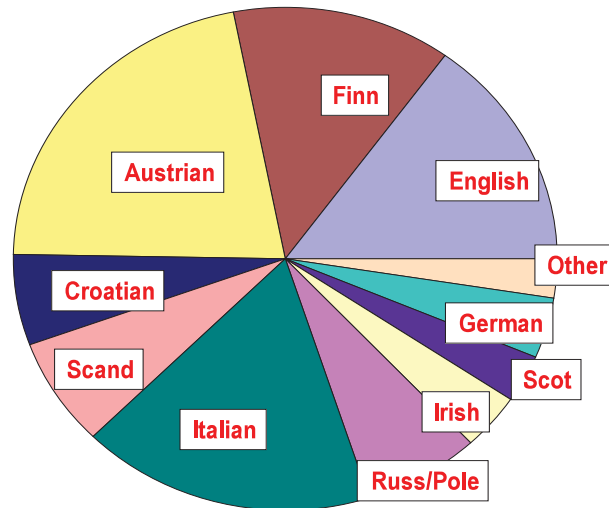
1905

1912



<sup>33</sup>U.S. Dept. of Labor. "Michigan Copper Strike," Bureau of Labour Statistics. *Bulletin*. No. 139, 1914. [accessed MTU Archives, Book Holdings]

## Underground Men 14 July 1913 C & H



Shifting employee numbers reflected hardening corporate views of “foreigners.” James MacNaughton in 1912 praised Swedes, Germans, Northern Italians and Austrians as “strong in stature, industrious and compliant.”<sup>34</sup> He deemed Lithuanians “docile” and preferred “the Germans to the Polacks.” Quincy’s C.L. Lawton in 1913 complained of “objectionable” workers<sup>35</sup> He wrote: “the Germans, Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, and Cornish give us the least trouble.” “We do not hold that the Italians are as bad as the Finns. The Finns are stubborn and sullen, ... while the Italians are more like an April shower – when they give up, it is all over.” Croatians and Austrians, he felt, were even worse than the Finns.<sup>36</sup> These views reflected workers’ commitment to the 1913 strike:<sup>37</sup>

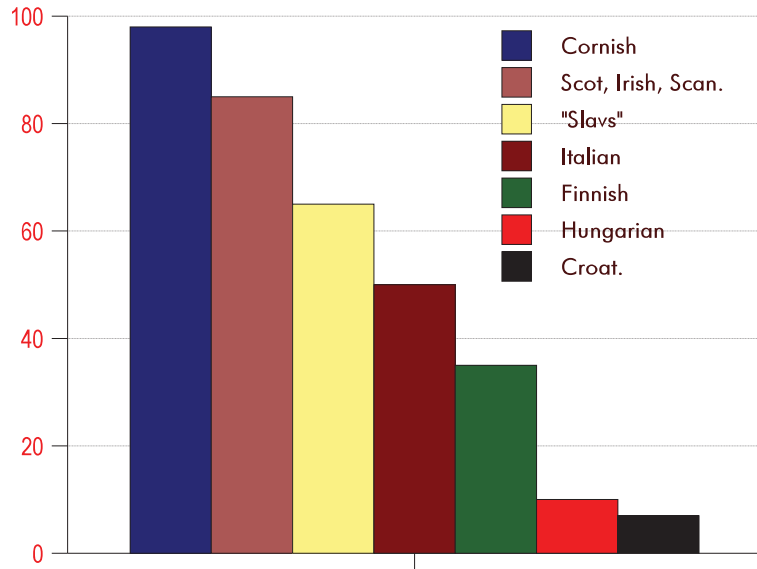
<sup>34</sup>Quoted in Lankton, *Cradle to Grave*, 211.

<sup>35</sup> Superintendent CL Lawton to Pres WR Todd, Oct 17, 1913, Quincy Records, Box 342 folder 011. See more letters in that box, for instance, 10 November 1913 [folder 11] and 22 January 1914 [folder 12].

<sup>36</sup>Lawton to Todd, 16 January 1914, Box 341, [folder 012]. On the ranking: Lawton to Todd, 10 November 1913, Box 343, [folder 017] re Labor Relations 1913-1914.

<sup>37</sup>Lankton, *Cradle to Grave*, 229.

### "Back to Work" Oct. 1913

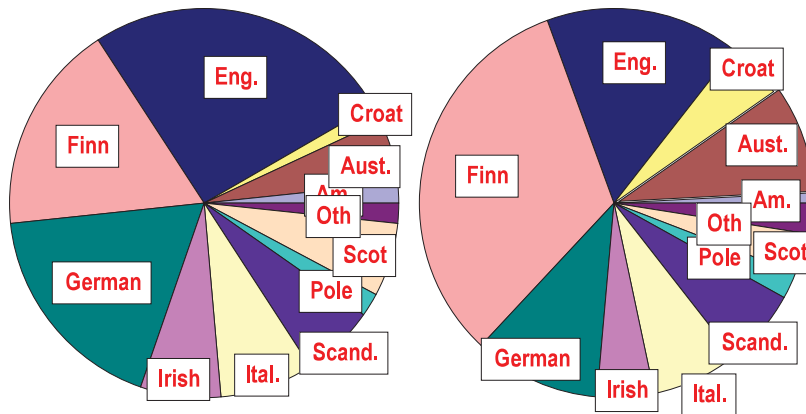


Needs could outweigh prejudice: Lawton ruefully noted there was "no use overlooking the fact that the good Finns are of the best workmen that we have."<sup>38</sup> By the 1920s C & H employed many Finns:

### C & H Workers by Ethnicity 1928

Surface

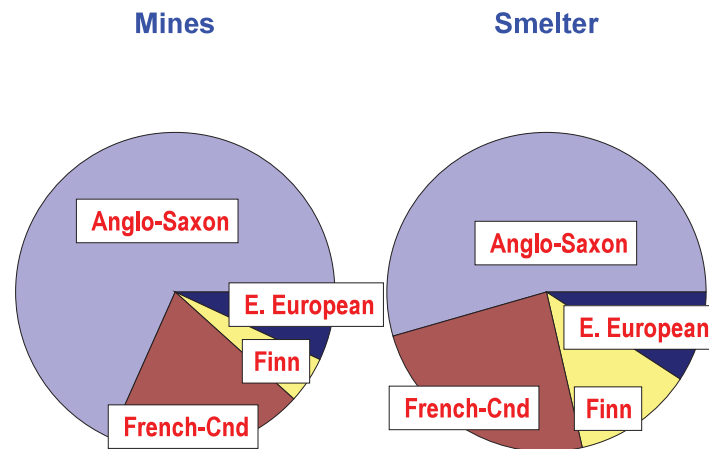
Undergd.



<sup>38</sup>Lawton to Todd, 22 Jan 1914, Box 342, [folder 012].

Likely building on the experience of Keweenaw and elsewhere, and aided by Canadian immigration policy that sought low cost labour, multi-ethnic workforces marked the Nickel Range from its beginnings.<sup>39</sup> Crews building the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1884 included “adventurous Finns, swarthy Italians, loquacious French Canadians, and sturdy British navvies.”<sup>40</sup> As for area mines, the earliest hints suggests that English Canadians, Welsh, Cornish, Finns and French Canadians were working – the last group far more often than is often thought:<sup>41</sup>

### C.C. Co. Employees, Nov. 1889



Accident records provide useful records of employment in the Nickel Range, as the ethnicity of the dead and injured was recorded in Ontario Bureau of Mines Reports for the period 1903 through 1913. For the nickel-copper mines, the Bureau reported 603 deaths and serious injuries:

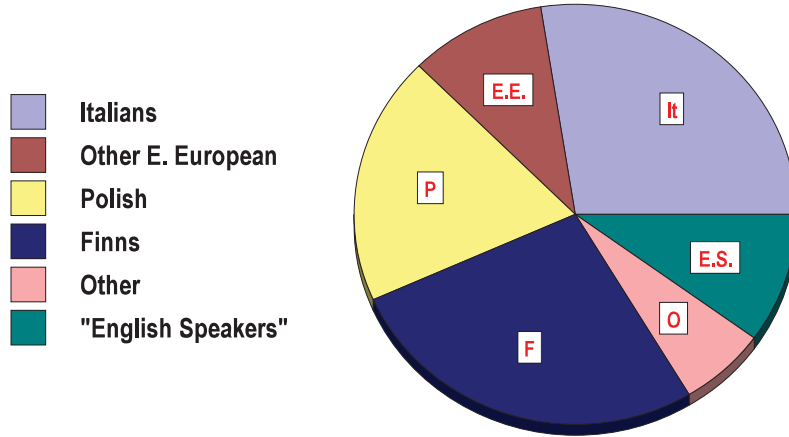
<sup>39</sup>On Canadian immigration and economic needs: Don Avery, *Dangerous Foreigners: European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932*, Toronto, McClelland & Stewart, 1979.

<sup>40</sup>Canada. Report of the Department of Immigration, 1884, *Sessional Papers*, No. 14, 1884, 21.

<sup>41</sup>Paul de la Riva. “Les Canadiens-Français et le travail minier dans la régions de Sudbury, 1886-1912,” *Revue du Nouvel Ontario* (1993:17), 32,37.43-44. *Canadiens* formed from 12 to 24 percent of the whole workforce. Quote, 47.

## Deaths & Injuries By Ethnicity

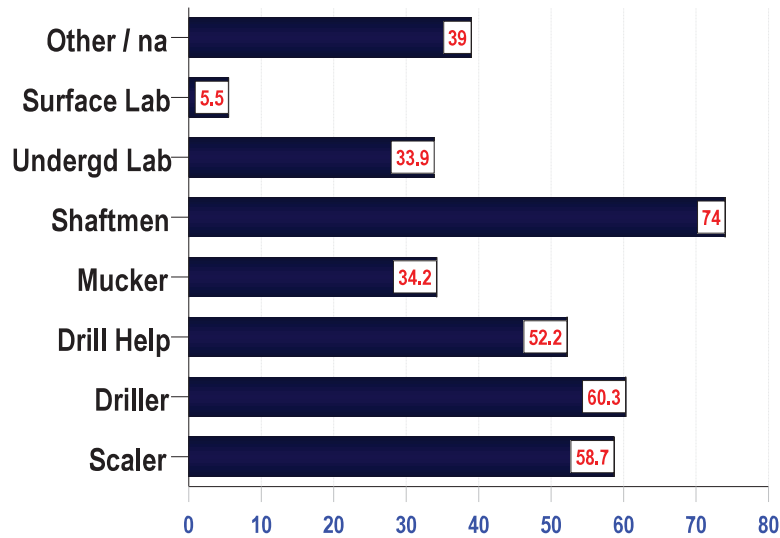
1903-13



Few other employment records are available.<sup>42</sup> Scattered Mond time books suggest Finnish roles:<sup>43</sup>

## Finns as % of Workers Mond Mine

Time Books 1908-1917



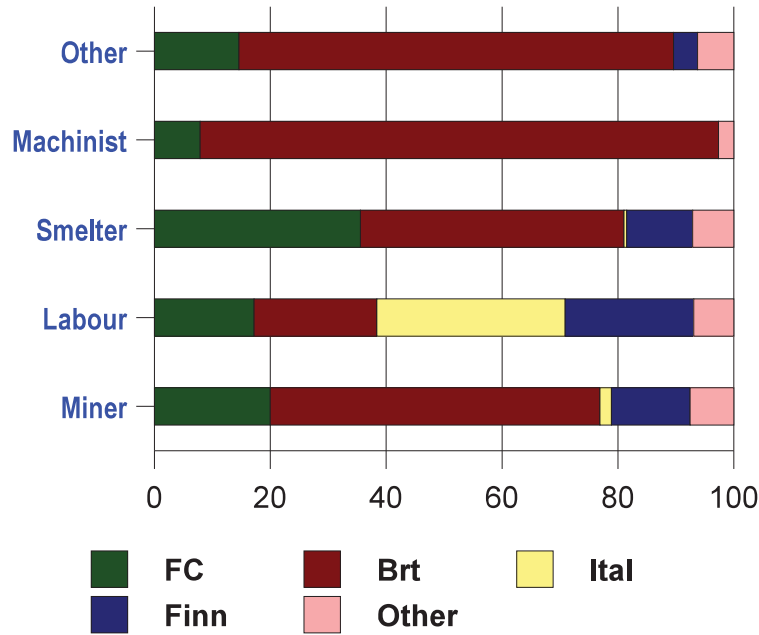
The 1901 manuscript census for McKim and Snider Townships, home to Copper Cliff and other

<sup>42</sup>The INCO Archives had a large collection of employment records. However, archival access has been spotty, and for well over a decade the former INCO, now VALE, has provided little or no access to the Archives.

<sup>43</sup>Mond Mine Time Books, 1908-1917. Examined in 1979 when held by Mr. Leo Jarvis of Toronto.

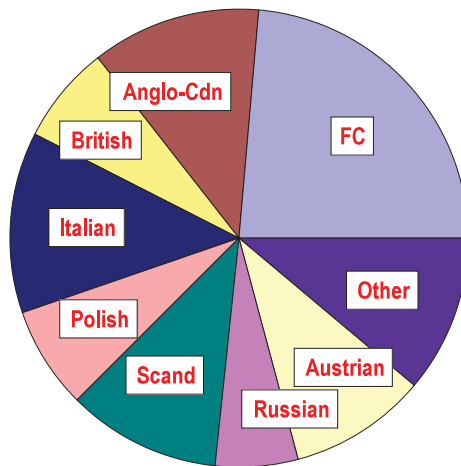


mines, offers broader detail.<sup>44</sup>



The work of Paul de la Riva also provides insights into ethnicity and mining/smelter work.<sup>45</sup>

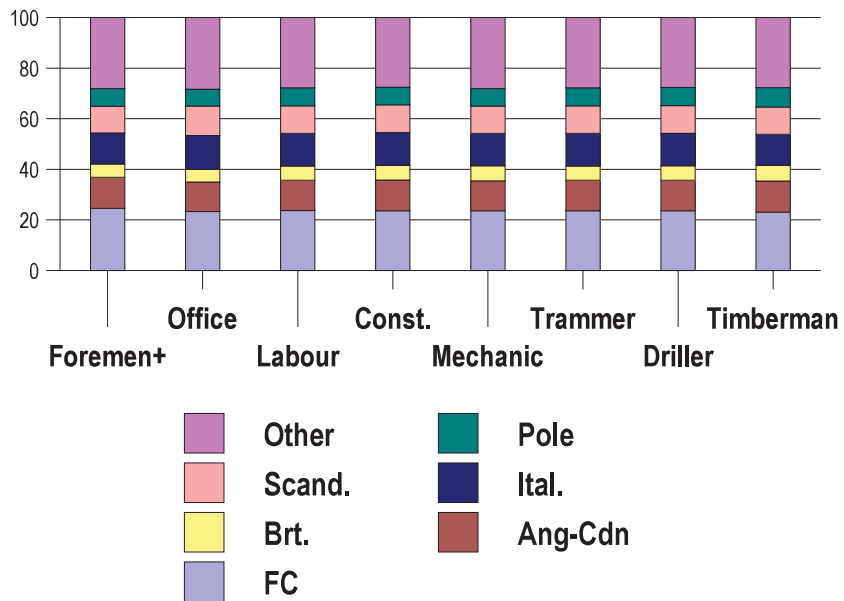
### INCO Hires, 1912-30



<sup>44</sup>Paul de la Riva , "Les Canadiens-Français et le travail minier," 54.

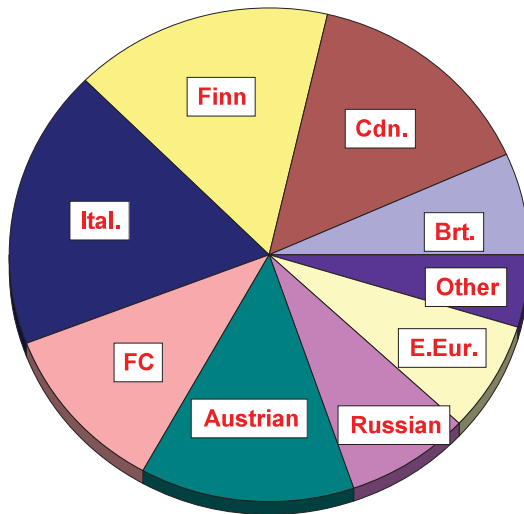
<sup>45</sup>He sampled some 5700 employment records. Paul de la Riva and Guy Goudeau. Les ouvriers-mineurs de la région de Sudbury (1912-1930): le cas de l'International Nickel Co.", *Revue du Nouvel Ontario* (1993:17): 111. See also Guy Goudeau. "Ethnicité et division du travail dan la modernisation d'une entreprise minière: la Canadian Copper Company,

### Ethnic Division of Work INCO 1912-30



Other local firms seemingly applied parallel hiring policies:

### BANCo Workforce 1920-21



1886-1928, *L'histoire des mineurs du nord Ontarien et Québécois 1886-1945*, Sillery, Les éditions du Septentrion, 72.

## Hegemony Challenged : Workers "Push Back"

Whatever their origins, these workers were increasingly regarded by the mining firms as a production expense, albeit one more narrowly defined: the modernization of mining saw the concept of "miner" fall out of use, replaced by more specific terms like timberman, drift runner, scaler, powderman and more.<sup>46</sup> By the turn of the century a more "scientific management" approach saw new leaders like William R. Todd at Quincy, and new power for James MacNaughton at C & H after death of Alexander Agassiz (1910). The result: a new "Taylorist" approach, with "less sympathy for the workers, less interest in benevolent paternalism, and more interest in efficiency and the bottom line."<sup>47</sup> Deep mining permitted year-round work, with carefully "engineered" mines, although its earlier beginnings left the Keweenaw mines teetering, sometimes precariously, between new and old methods and mining layouts. In short, the mineral industry, never a low cost venture, became more capital intensive on both sides of the border. Mechanized operations eased some physical burdens, but the new technology increased per capita production, leaving a pool of surplus labour which ensured stable or even declining wage rates. Not all workers were affected equally, because the more modern mines brought some skills to the fore while others became outmoded.<sup>48</sup>

## Workplace & Sustaining Identity

Yet, the economic and social maturation of both the Keweenaw and Nickel Belts meant that the mining firms' employees *had* alternative economic choices. Thus, the new "hard line" could not

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<sup>46</sup>Difficulties in reaching more precise numbers are discussed in Guy Goudreau. "Ethnicité et division du travail dan la modernisation d'une entreprise minière," esp. 73-74.

<sup>47</sup>Hoagland, *Mine Towns*, xiv-xv.

<sup>48</sup>For Keweenaw see the various works by Larry Lankton. *On the Nickel Belt: Ontario, Report of the Royal Ontario Nickel Commission*, 212-27; Alexander Gray, *Organization and Equipment of the Canadian Copper Company* Toronto (?): n.p., 1911, and the annual Ontario Bureau of Mines Reports.

prevent a "negotiation" between mining regime and workers.<sup>49</sup> First, workers could challenge firms' "unjust exactions" against their employees, whether in terms of work, wages or rigid company control. This oppression, the *Sudbury Journal* reported in 1891, could be confronted by "knowledge on the part of the men of their rights and unity amongst themselves in upholding them." Five years later, James Orr, editor of the *Journal*, published a critique of the Canadian Copper Company "regime" which asserted that "any man ... who raises a voice or a hand against the imperious will of this corporation... is certain to be ... severely boycotted." He likely felt the pressure: by August 1900 Orr wrote approvingly of Canadian Copper's firing of "useless" (i.e. troublesome) men. In 1908 the nationally subscribed, Toronto-based *Saturday Night* showed even less courage, applauding the renamed INCO's policy as "civic despotism ... of the most amiable and felicitous character."<sup>50</sup>

Given such corporate might, many workers opted for the most obvious form of protest, departing for other economic options. For those remaining, the long hours, dangerous conditions and low wages provoked labour actions that blended working class and ethnic identities. By 1897 a "workers' organization" held twice-monthly meetings at the Finnish Temperance Hall in Copper Cliff. On 20 July 1899, miners at Canadian Copper's Evans, McArthur and Copper Cliff mines went on strike, demanding a fifteen percent wage increase. Though the strike "fizzled out" and the ringleaders were fired, a precedent had been set. A series of pay cuts in October 1901 caused another fruitless "jump" by workers at the Froid and Stobie mines.<sup>51</sup> Workers willing to take the chance came from various backgrounds, including Finns and Italians, Poles, Ukrainians and more – unrest remained a

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<sup>49</sup>Hoagland, xxiii-xxiv.

<sup>50</sup>In the first case, the Dominion Mineral Company drew the editor's wrath. *Sudbury Journal*, 9 April 1891. Later comments from: 27 February 1896, 5 October 1899; *Saturday Night*, 16 May 1908, 5.

<sup>51</sup>"Poytakirja tehty Oikeuden Ohje seurallen Copper Cliff" (Minutes of the Righteous Path Society Copper Cliff), May 23, 1897; Finnish Canadian Historical Society Collection, Public Archives of Ontario. In 1899, Canadian Copper lost over 100 men over wages. *Sudbury Journal*, 20,27 July, 21 September 1899; *Sault Star*, 23 October 1901.

constant, if officially ignored factor in the work place: a strike in 1904 involved three or four hundred workers at the Copper Cliff smelters. Italian strike leaders were arrested, fined and fired, but the pattern continued.<sup>52</sup>

Even as miners and smeltermen periodically struck, ethnicity was a complicating factor: the British mining authority Ralph Stokes condescendingly wrote:

In regard to the labour position, Sudbury is well favoured. With its smelters largely worked by Italians, whose foremost aim is to save money and return to their "Sunny South," and its mines operated by Finns and Polanders, who are found to make a good hard working combination, few troubles arise through discontent. Strikes have not been entirely absent from the field, but those that have occurred have been abortive affairs, without a well defined origin and with flickering termination. Undisturbed by the sensational socialistic propaganda of garrulous leaders, these slow minded foreigners give satisfaction and receive it. Their pay is not high, but it is sure and steady; nice calculations can be entered into far in advance as to saving capacity and the time necessary for the accumulation of some desired amount.<sup>53</sup>

Stokes' haughty, racist condemnation notwithstanding, strikes continued. A successful spontaneous strike in 1909 at Mond's Garson mine gave impetus to a unionization drive in 1910. By 1913, the new fight pushed for both an eight hour day<sup>54</sup> and Western Federation of Miners locals at Garson and Sudbury.<sup>55</sup>

Union members drew the renewed wrath of local employers, especially the Finns who worked

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<sup>52</sup>*Labour Gazette* 4 (February 1904): 808-09; *Sudbury Journal*, 14 January 1904; *Sault Star*, 14 January 1904.

<sup>53</sup>Ralph Stokes, *Mining World*, September 28, 1907, 509. Elsewhere he also includes Austrians. While racist, he saw differences, terming Finns "keen, hardworking, muscular men," while dismissing the Poles as men for whom "cleanliness is not a cardinal virtue." Ralph Stokes, *Mines and Minerals of the British Empire: Being a Description of the Historical, Physical & Industrial Features*. London: Edward Arnold, 1908, 10, ----. *Mines and minerals of the British Empire being a description of the historical, physical, & industrial features of the principal centres of mineral production in the British dominions beyond the seas*. London, 1908, 323.

<sup>54</sup>Samuel Price. "Report re Limitations of the Hours of Labor of Underground Workmen in the Mines of Ontario," Ontario, *Sessional Papers* (1913), no.82, 5.

<sup>55</sup>*Industrial Worker*, 20 March 1913; J.D. Barry, "The Miners at Porcupine," *International Socialist Review*, March 1913, 652; *Sudbury Star*, 19 August 1916; Canada, *Labour Organization* (1913): 94,107,158,174; John Penttinen, "Muistelmia Garsonista," (Memories of Garson), in Sula, ed., *Suomalaiset Nikkeliäluella*, translated in Mike Solski and John Smaller, *Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada since 1895* (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 99.

to organize not only fellow Finns but Italians and Polish miners.<sup>56</sup> Mond Nickel, operator of the Garson mine, used both illegal actions, firings and worked in concert with INCO and smaller local firms like Moose Mountain Mining to break the local. Mine managers blacklisted "suspect ethnics": the conservative *Canadian Uutiset* claimed Finns would not be hired at Mond's Worthington mine.<sup>57</sup> Mine unionization in the Nickel Belt lay enfeebled until World War II, when Federal Order in Council 1003 ordered recognition of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers.<sup>58</sup>

Union efforts in the Keweenaw were no less challenging, although much more spectacular and thus remembered in both academe and popular culture. As early as the 1870s strikes by the International Workingmen's Association were "quieted" by joint corporate and government [military] effort. These early failures saw unions associated with "un-American" and "foreign" principles, thus linking labour peace with assimilation. Forays by the Knights of Labor in the 1880s and 1890s were followed by the WFM, which entered the field in 1903. By then, local mining firms applied selective hiring and firing, spying and other pressures plus corporate paternalism, including anticipating demands and giving in to some that seemed capable of causing major trouble.<sup>59</sup> All these corporate tactics could not prevent growing labour tensions – deep, dangerous mines needed to be worked at low cost to be profitable, while workers grew ever more aware of the WFM, not to mention conditions in other mining camps. In this setting, the introduction of a one-man drill proved a catalyst for

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<sup>56</sup>The Garson local's records are in Finnish. Finns sought funds to organize the Italians and Poles. William Eklund, *Canadian Rakentajia: Canadian Suomalaisten Järjestön Historia ww.1911-1971*. Toronto: Vapaus, 1983, 138.

<sup>57</sup>Mond hired Pinkerton's spies. See: John Latvala, Sellwood, to the FOC National Office, 22 January 1914, "Correspondence, National Office File, FOC," FOC, MG 28 V 46 vol.2, no.2. See also: Eklund, 133; *Sudbury Star*, 5 August 1914, 19 August 1916; *Toronto Star*, 18 August 1916; Canada, *Labour Organization* (1914); 226, (1916): 73,138,221. *Canadian Uutiset*, 7 May 1925; *Vapaus*, 10 June, 17 December 1926.

<sup>58</sup>On the return of Mine Mill; Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, *Annual Report* (1936): 182, (1937): 89, J.T. O'Connor, "Nickel Magnates Fight Union Efforts in North," *Social Forum* (February, 1937): 1; Canada, National War Labour Relations Board, *Proceeding No. 1*, 34-36, No. 7, 557-598.

<sup>59</sup>Lankton, *Cradle to Grave*, 201-207 covers the pre-WFM union efforts.

confrontation: the “Copper Country Strike of 1913” became one of the iconic strikes in American history. While many issues were afoot – from workplace safety to union versus corporate “rights”, there was no mistaking ethnic elements. As the strike dragged on, the Finns, Hungarians and Croatians stayed the course as ethnic origin divided the local populace. Non-strikers were “Citizens”, the strikers were “foreign agitators” or worse. Inevitably divisive and racist, the labels were also false – some “Citizens” supported the strike, and many immigrants went to work. Even the strikers were hardly hard-bitten radicals. Instead, many celebrated like the “Citizens” – a Christmas party hardly challenged society. But when a party at the Italian Hall ended with panicked flight [for reasons that remain controversial], the “Italian Hall Massacre” became a tragic and divisive part of the Keweenaw’s overall and ethnic historical heritage.<sup>60</sup> Tragedy did not mean change – the mining firms still insisted that immigrants be “reliable” workers – not just hard working, but indifferent to unions. Thus, in the 1920s, the *Engineering and Mining Journal* congratulated area firms for killing unionism even as they built “out of foreigners, ignorant of Anglo-Saxon institutions, citizens that any community can well be proud of.”<sup>61</sup> Ironically, much worse times saw unions installed, as the Great Depression inspired Wagner Act, and resulting National Labor Relations Board, saw Mine Mill arrive. The legacy of difficult relations continued: failing firms rejected worker demands, claiming, as ever, the need to remain competitive.<sup>62</sup> In the end, then, very different roads saw Mine Mill installed in both regions, only to face accusations of being a “Red” union in the new “Cold War” world after 1945.

Working for Oneself, or at Least not for the Mining Company

While labour activism fluctuated in intensity, an alternative “protest” was constant: leaving the

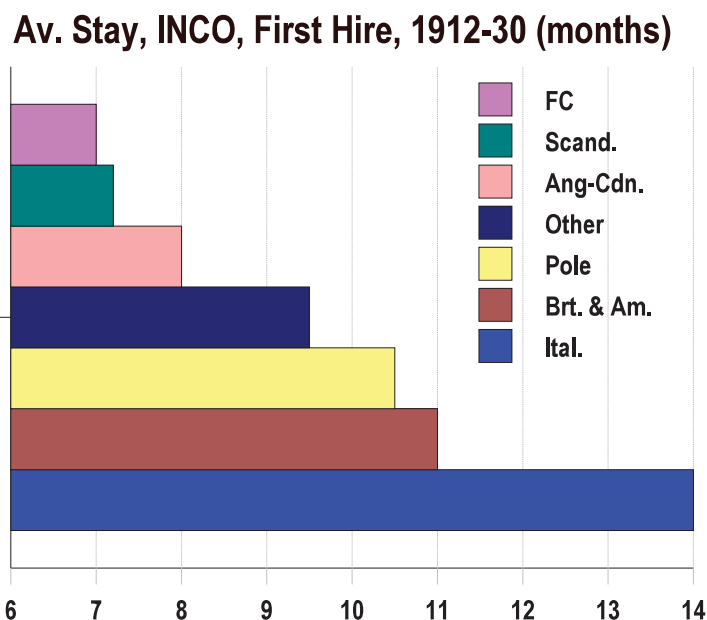
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<sup>60</sup>Lankton, *Hollowed Ground* devotes a chapter to the strike (191-206), as does his *Cradle to Grave* (219-243.) See the still smoldering emotion in Steve Lehto. *Death’s Door: The Truth Behind Michigan’s Largest Mass Murder*. Troy: Momentum Books, 2006.

<sup>61</sup>Cited in Lankton. *Cradle to Grave*, 144.

<sup>62</sup>Lankton, *Cradle to Grave*, 257-258.

“unjust” employment of mining firms:<sup>63</sup>



Leaving mining or the smelters did not always mean leaving mining towns. In the Nickel Belt, Sudbury offered many economic options, as it served as a central place, a railway centre and a “jump off” point for forestry.<sup>64</sup> Records for other communities are sparse, but it is evident that Finns, Slovaks, Ukrainians and French Canadians all operated businesses in Mond, a small place in comparison to Sudbury and Copper Cliff. Citizens of communities of whatever size both operated and procured the services of businesses of many sorts. Close study of Ukrainians in the Sudbury area, for instance, shows that these urban settings offered sustenance in a myriad of ways ranging from boarding to bootlegging to gardening and even selling items like blueberries.<sup>65</sup> Finns, too, were active across the economic spectrum. In Sudbury alone, they earned their keep in many ways:

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<sup>63</sup>Compiled in Paul de la Riva and Guy Gaudreau. *Les ouvriers-mineurs de la région de Sudbury (1912-1930): le cas de l’International Nickel Co.* in *L’histoire des mineurs du nord Ontarien et Québécois 1886-1945*, 121, 138.

<sup>64</sup>See Krats, “The Sudbury Area to the Great Depression,” and Saarinen, *From Meteorite Impact to Constellation City*.

<sup>65</sup>Zembreski, “Memory, Identity and the Challenge of Community Among Ukrainians in the Sudbury Region,” 281.



Finnish Occupations Sudbury, 1911-1945<sup>66</sup>

Skilled	Proprietors	Professionals	Service
pipefitter	boarding house	minister	taxi drivers
machinist	garages	stenographer	barber
mechanic	baker	chemist	waitress
blacksmith	grocer	teacher	cook
painter	sauna	nurse	laundress
tailor	clothing store	engineer	hairdresser
carpenter	restaurant/cafe	doctor	dairyman
watchmaker	dairy	editor	domestic
shoemaker	real estate	bookkeeper	
electrician	ski factory	druggist	
woodworker	bottling co.	photographer	
typesetter	coal-wood supplier	chiropractor	
	farm supplies	lawyer	

Similarly, entrepreneurial Italians provided merchandizing, contracting and services to their peers, especially in "Little Italy" in Copper Cliff.<sup>67</sup> By 1910, Little Italy [the former Crow's Nest] was "almost self-sufficient in terms of ethnic goods and folkways. From the grocery or general stores... to the bakery ... and the tailor shop, [ butchers, and photographer] ... Italians could meet their needs without leaving the enclave."<sup>68</sup> Much the same occurred across various centres in the Nickel Range as Finns, Slovaks, Ukrainians, French Canadians and perhaps others operated businesses in Mond until the mine there closed.

Among the most favoured economic alternatives lay beyond the "urban" setting, as persons of Finnish background in particular sought both "self sufficiency" and a chance to take advantage of strong local market found in the Keweenaw mining villages and towns. Finnish agricultural efforts reflected a "land hunger" fired by important traditions: freedom from control and communal sharing

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<sup>66</sup>Vernon's *Directory Sudbury and Copper Cliff*, 1911, 1921, 1931; Saarinen, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, 207-08.

<sup>67</sup>Karen Reilly, "Les Italiens de Copper Cliff, 1886-1914," *Revue du Nouvel Ontario* (1993:17) 68, 73.

<sup>68</sup>Maurizio Visentin, "The Italians of Sudbury," *Polyphony* (1983, 1) 30

of effort made farms places of relative freedom. In Finnish: "Oma tupa, oma lupa."<sup>69</sup> Working physically distinctively – both in terms of buildings and crops – the Finns shaped "a sense of community in a new environment" that influenced the broader social settings in assertive rather than passive ways. Along with dairy products, potatoes would be a significant crop into the Second World War era. Smaller operations served as a safeguard in case work at the mines came to a halt or as additional income<sup>70</sup>

Similarly, in the Sudbury area, Finns joined French Canadian, Polish, and other immigrants seeking both sustenance and freedom from direct corporate influence by farming. Lands around Sudbury were available both as Provincial Crown Lands and by purchase from previous owners. French Canadians quickly took up lands in the comparative flat and fertile "Valley" north of Sudbury; rougher, rockier lands to the east, south and especially west were taken up by various immigrants as well as some later arriving *Canadiens*. One could work seasonally in the forest or as a hunting and fishing guide, or even work full time in the mines while, with strong family support, maintaining a rural property. Land thus had both emotional resonance and pragmatic appeal. In Lorne, Louise, Broder, Dill and Waters townships Finns slowly carved out Finnish enclaves. The "patchy" settlement imposed by the Canadian Shield, physically distinctive in its own right, was accompanied by dove-tailed construction techniques, saunas, numerous outbuildings and mixed farming that included the use of rye as a food grain.<sup>71</sup>

Elsewhere, French Canadians began as "hay and oats" operators supplying forestry

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<sup>69</sup>Arnold Alanen and Suzanna Raker, "From Phoenix to Pelkie: Finnish Farm Buildings in the Copper Country," *New Perspectives on Michigan's Copper Country*, ed. A.K. Hoagland et.al.. Calumet, 2007, *passim*.

<sup>70</sup>Kaunonen, *Finns in Michigan*, East Lansing, 2009, 17-56, 93. See similar comments in Arthur Thurner. *Strangers and Sojourners: A History of Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula*, Detroit, 1994, 142-144, 231-233.

<sup>71</sup>Krats, "The Sudbury Area to the Great Depression" has a chapter on Nickel Belt agriculture. On Finns: \_\_\_\_\_. "Kannonmunitajat: Rural Finns in the Sudbury Basin 1883-1939," paper given at the Agricultural History of Ontario Seminar, University of Guelph, 1983. Good maps are in: Saarinen, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, 69-99.

operations, but the comparatively level and rich Valley farms fast assumed the character of an agrarian community. These farms added an agricultural setting quite unlike that of the Shield, featuring large, contiguous fields and buildings erected alongside straight, regularly intersecting roads. Small clusters of these buildings often coalesced into "crossroads" villages; the Chelmsford Agricultural Society (1918), a United Farmers' of Ontario store (1921) and the Balfour and Rayside Farm Credit Association (1922) also invited comparison with old Ontario.

Whether increasingly sophisticated or rudimentary, area farms – selling milk, potatoes and much more – provided sustenance and relative relief from corporate pressures. Individual success varied greatly, of course, but farming in the Nickel Range remained a viable life choice. By 1931 some 25,000 acres of land were in crops (mainly forage and roots, notably potatoes.) The farms boasted some 1,400 horses, 6,200 cattle, 48,000 fowl and several thousand swine and sheep. District farm values rose to \$ 9.9 million, or about double that of 1911. Creameries, farm markets and farm co-operatives all testified to the economic role of agriculture, a role sustained until postwar regulations and mechanization thwarted local farming.<sup>72</sup>

Beyond the mine and field lay the forest, which long provided an important economic alternative – large stands of white and red pine and other trees only gradually submitted to the axe and saw. By the 1860s timber operations in Upper Michigan saw *Canadiens*, Irish, Germans, Scots, Swedes at work; more Scandinavians and Finns took their turn as the century waned. As the new century dawned, southern and eastern Europeans were in the woods, notably Italians, Slovaks, and Croats.<sup>73</sup> Even after the large trees were felled, Finns, Poles and other immigrants joined *Canadiens* cutting pulpwood: this seasonal labour was "recruited from the agricultural districts and ... paid in

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<sup>72</sup>By 1931, over 40 townships were available as free or sales lands, although 13 were closed to settlement in whole or in part to prevent sulphur pollution damage claims. Krats, "The Sudbury Area,"

<sup>73</sup>T. J. Karamanski, *Deep Woods Frontier: A History of Logging in Northern Michigan*. Detroit, 1989, 105, 205.

accordance with prevailing agricultural standards." With the logs floated to mills outside the region, forestry retained its "boom and bust" character: seasonal influxes of men, money and sometimes chaos descended on area communities.<sup>74</sup>

Many other options remained, including harvesting the "wildlife" – the fishery, whether commercial or geared to recreation, provided sustenance in both regions. A significant commercial fishing operation long was a feature of the Keweenaw. Less well known is the economic role of fish in the Sudbury area. Pioneered by the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Whitefish Lake post of the Hudson's Bay Company, which caught lake herring on Lake Penage, small scale catches continued on Penage and Wanapitei lakes into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. More money came by attracting "outsiders" [read: Americans] linked to the resource firms; these executives sought fishing and hunting lodges for their leisure. Lake Penage featured fish camps by about 1905; by the 1920s, several Finns opted for this "outdoor" life.

A small number of area citizens relied on the "hunt" in a different way, earning some or all of their income by operating trap lines – one, for instance, ran from the Finnish settlement in Louise Township south to the shore of Georgian Bay. Finns were likely enough to be trappers and hunters that the largest hardware retailer in Northern Ontario – Cochrane Hardware – advertized its wares to those involved in "Metsästys ja Träppäys."<sup>75</sup> Mix in collecting wild berries, mainly blueberries but also cranberries. Stacey Zembreski found much the same pattern for the region's Ukrainian population.<sup>76</sup> Thus one finds a small but significant number who used the "natural bounty" to avoid much of the

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<sup>74</sup> Thomas Edison noted that area farmers, with "nothing to do winters... work cheap." "Notes on Visit [1903] to Sudbury," Edison Documents, Sudbury Public Library, Regional Room. Two decades on, *Vapaus* noted: "nearly all the farmers have gone to the camps, as jobbers or to make the bucksaw sing." 6 November 1924. For details: Ian Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900-1980* (Toronto, 1987); Gwenda Hallsworth, "A Good Paying Business: Lumbering on the North Shore of Lake Huron, 1850-1910 with particular Reference to the Sudbury District," (M.A., Laurentian University, 1983).

<sup>75</sup>The sign was painted on the Sudbury store. Translation : Hunting and Trapping.

<sup>76</sup>Zembreski, "Memory, Identity and the Challenge of Community Among Ukrainians in the Sudbury Region," 313.

pressures of an increasingly corporate-dominated resource area.

### Not Just Men

Men, not surprisingly, earned most of the wages, and were deemed owners of businesses and farms across both the Keweenaw and the Nickel Range. That reflected both the staples economies and, more especially, a society steeped in patriarchal values. Yet there was also no mistaking that family economies existed. On the farms, particularly when there was seasonal off-farm employment, the roles of wives (and indeed the children) was crucial. Wives did not only the “conventional” duties – food preparation and preservation, making clothes and more – they also partook of the planting, harvest, threshing (or otherwise preparing collected crops). Children did as much of the same as their age, physical capacity and, to some extent, school attendance would permit. The last might “fall by the wayside” if many hands were required.

In more urban settings, there were still the almost innumerable “women’s duties”, which extended in many directions. As Alison Hoagland puts it,

Few married women worked outside the home but many of them kept boarders to increase the family income. Less visibly, they also took in laundry or sewing or sold eggs or milk.... Looking at houses inevitably becomes an examination of women’s work.<sup>77</sup>

Widowed women might work as laundresses; single women could be servants, or work as clerks, waitresses, cooks, servants; a few even became business owners. Smaller numbers found sustenance in professions (nursing, teaching), and there were “outliers” like women who served as camp cooks in the lumber and pulp camps of Northern Ontario.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Hoagland, *Mine Towns*, xvii. The discussion on women should be much more substantial, but is limited because of the breadth of the paper and resultant limitations of space.

<sup>78</sup>Varpu Lindstrom. “Finnish Women’s Experiences in Northern Ontario Lumber Camps, 1920-1939,” *Changing Lives: Women in Northern Ontario*. eds. Margaret Kechnie and M. Reitsma-Street, Toronto, 1996, 107-122. For considerable detail on Sudbury area Ukrainian women’s roles: Zembreski, “Memory, Identity and the Challenge of Community Among Ukrainians in the Sudbury Region,” *passim*.

## Identity, Incomes and Individuals

These varied opportunities meant that local residents were *not* entirely subject to the control of the mining firms, no matter their corporate, financial and even physical power. Life in resource communities, to quote Kerry Abel's brilliant work, was complicated.

Conflict and consensus tripped around one another in a sometimes clumsy dance as both company and worker tried to shape a living space while exploiting the raw material of a resource economy, living in a hierarchical (and male) workplace, and experiencing a degree of physical isolation in a northern climate. In the end, communities emerged that reflected the workers' aspirations to a far greater extent than the social-control model of the company town would allow.<sup>79</sup>

In the end, this paper suggests multiple economic identities – people who balanced their ethnic, vocational, ideological and personal beings. Historical case study punctuated by the Canadian-American border relationship helps test our understanding of how people are defined and how they define themselves, *and* what they will do to sustain themselves. While the "parallel" economic, demographic and environmental contexts discussed here were far from absolute, the comparison provides many insights and starting off points for more detailed comparison. Focussing on both the Nickel Belt and the Copper Country suggests that resource regions shared many experiences while veering apart on others. Deeper examination of both similarities and differences challenge "convenient generalities." For now, there many questions are more asked than answered, but the asking raises doubts about too-common generalizations about labour, identity and more. Following such questions make the historical journey worth taking.

Peter V. Krats  
Western University

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<sup>79</sup>Kerry Abel. *Changing Places: History, Community, and Identity in Northeastern Ontario*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006, 248.