

## Toivola

Michigan Name Places: “Toivola, Houghton County. Formerly a logging camp, the village was founded by Finns who gave it the Finnish name for the vale of hope. A station on the Copper Range Railroad. Earl N. Drake became it’s first postmaster on January 19, 1905, succeeded by AA Lange in 1906” also Leonard E. ( Shorty) Pennanen, and Albin Lahikainen.

Clarence Monette’s 1975 book *Some Copper Country Names and Places* says: Toivola is a Finnish name pronounced “**T**oy-Vo-la” which seems to have two meanings – “the place of Toivo” or “Hopeful”. This Finnish agricultural and lumbering community had a population of 25 in 1909 and is located 16 miles southwest of Houghton in Houghton County, Stanton Township on Highway M 26. It was formerly a logging camp, and the village was founded in 1894. The Heikkinen Elementary School was closed in 1999. However it still has a post office and is known for the Elm River Sugar Bush (author’s note: closed now) and the Toivola Apostolic Lutheran Church. It was served by the Copper Range Railroad and maintained a large depot.

1910 Census has these family names: (it is difficult to read the penmanship of the census taker so please excuse the guess of letters) Andrew Johnson, William Mattila, Daniel Lambert, Matti Lambert, Benjamin sp? Nansola, Jacob Alatala, John Loukonen, Gabriel Miskonen, Peter Tomberg, William Rauila, Fredrick Vaulous, Daniel Ermen, Elias Michaelson, John Sallinen, John Alaniva, Elias Johnson, Jacob Logonen, Leonard Jasoilla, Arvid Kemp, Reick Heikkanen, John Aho, Matti Perralan, Mike Tassila, Jacob Lindr??, Matti Harronen, Esias Trusti, Henry Kommes, Richart Jurmu, Peter Komula, Albert Laurilla, Emil Rohko, Samuel Sukari, John Heikkanen.

In Ontonagon County but on the Misery Bay road was the Misery Bay School first located on the North side of the road, and later on the South side of the Misery Bay Road. The later is a community building now. A water artesian spring flows by the building off the Misery Bay road. The school was serviced by Superintendent Earl B. Holman.

The area of Misery Bay in Ontonagon County was once called Carver’s Bay originally named by Jonathan Carver the skipper who admired this shoreline. When and why it’s name changed is unknown though one version is the area had Misery Indians, a unit of the Chippewa or Ojibway group. Misery might go back to before 1856 when the Shawmut Mine was founded between the Elm River mine area and Wyandot Mining Co. Another story is the settlers in the area experienced trouble with arrivals of provisions by boat and moved to Ontonagon.

The online version of the popular travel book “Hunt’s Guide to Michigan’s Upper Peninsula”. A candid guide to enjoying and understanding the U. P. Toivola:

Toivola is a former logging camp and stop on the old Copper Range Railroad. In Finnish, Toivola means "city of hope." Today it's a dispersed rural community, spread out, but with a strong sense of identity. As late as the 1940s, in the last years of the Finnish subsistence farm era, Toivola numbered nearly 500. The post office and the lively Toivola Lunch restaurant are on M-26, but most of the

close-in part of town, with an active ball diamond, are along Misery Bay Road north of the highway. The Heikkinen School, restored by a local couple, is a few miles farther north.

Misery Bay Road leads to Agate Beach on Misery Bay, one of the Keweenaw's magical, tucked-away spots, with agate beaches and a 25-site primitive campground. A bonfire — sometimes a raucous bonfire — is held there on Juhannes, St. John's Day, the old Scandinavian feast day near the summer solstice. Since 1994 (but not in 2008), the Agate Beach Acoustic Jamboree has been held, spearheaded by two local musicians. Check here in 2009. (*—April, 2008*)



**The remains of a little barn on Misery Bay Road, a frequent sight in the area. Finns made a living on these places, miniscule by today's standards.**

From an excerpt of a copy unidentified by author located at the Houghton Co. Historical Museum, Lake Linden MI Barb found this information: page 32.

Early Toivola residents depended on the local logging industries for part of their revenue. In the winter, when the farm land was frozen and the clearing of it was largely impossible, the men would go to work in the logging camps.

The research conducted by Naasko contains this information: The men stayed in the lumber camps all winter. The logs were hauled by sled to 3 major areas on the shore of Lake Superior. Some were hauled to the Misery River, some to Rockhouse Point, and some to Agate Beach and Little Elm River. Here they were heaved into enormous piles which could be toppled by removing a key log. This log was removed in the spring after the thaw; and the logs would go into the river and then be formed into huge rafts or loaded onto barges and taken to the mills.

The two main sawmills were the Ford Saw Mill in Pequaming and a saw mill in Lake Linden. After the roads were improved in the 1930's the logging operations changed to trucks hauling the logs.

As a child the late Linda Honkavvara Rauvala, said she enjoyed listening to the logging camp stories. She compiled some of her favorite anecdotes for this work:

“During the early 1900's many of the homesteaders worked in the lumber camps during the winter. They were called lumber jacks or “Jacks”. Jobs included the filing of cross cut saws and chopping timber.

Before daylight the cook and helpers could hear the teams passing knocking the whipple trees and chains against the frozen road.

The teamsters had to be up early to feed the horses. The men lived in a bunk house and by that early hour the cook had coffee ready for them.

The water tank was connected to the cook stove and when the water started to heat in the pipes, it would make a ‘blop’ sound, slow at first, then faster and faster, blop, blop, till it was hot. In the evening, when the kitchen help was in bed, it was a soothing sound to make them sleep when that same blop came slower and slower and stopped.

Cooks’ helper duties included banging the steel triangle to wake the men each morning. Then he’d bang it again later to let the men know it’s time for breakfast for breakfast. After they ate and were dressed for work the boss would come to the main camp and kick the door open and yell ‘Roll out boys’.

In the evenings, the men would mend clothes, play cards and tell stories. Some of them would go into the kitchen and peel vegetables, to earn their evening coffee.

The older men not able to use the cross cut saws were called Road Monkeys.. Their job was to clear away the horse dropping from the roads so the loads could slide freely. They also sanded the hills so the teams would not run down too fast.

The clerk and the foreman lodged in the office. They sold clothing, tobacco, lamp and lantern chimneys and some simple remedies and tools.

When a ‘Jack’ wanted to quit his job, he’d bring his axe into the office. Some old –timers still say, “He brought his axe into the office” when they speak of someone resigning from a job, even after the camps were closed.

Tony Webster built a saloon during the lumber camp years. Most of his customers were ‘Jacks’.

Hardy Johnson began working the lumber camps in 1924, when he was 13 years of age. He said you don’t know what stinky is. There would be over a hundred men sleeping in a camp. You open the window and ten old timers would shout “Don’t let that polluted air in here!” Hardy drove the horse team. Some of the men in the camp were hired by his dad during the summer on the family farm where they cleared acreage for their room and board.

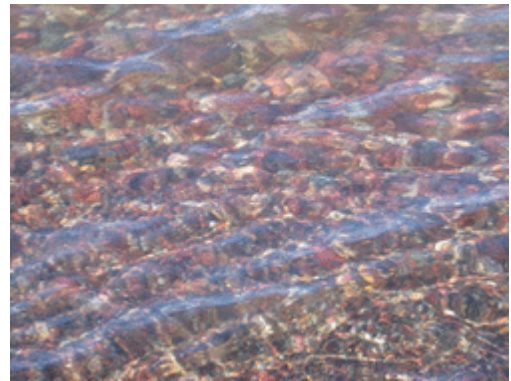
Ed Spiegel shared: “at lumber camps some fellows became highly educated from their reading. They’d talk about Aristotle and the other philosophers and have great debates.



Agate Beach

**Looking at the north half of the crescent beach shows how much rock hunters have to indulge their pleasures.**

It's labeled Santa Monica Beach on maps, but everyone in the region calls it "Agate Beach," and indeed there are agates to find at the right times for those with the patience to spot them. But the rock-strewn edge of this vast, un-crowded, sandy crescent has more than agates. All kinds of colorful rocks are here. It's a visually splendid stretch—long views up and down of the beach and the forests behind.



**The colorful rocks extend far into Lake Superior, which keeps pushing fresh ones onto the shore.**

The Agate Beach area was a popular site for summer time gatherings. One of the favorite traditions residents carried out there was St. John's Day. A celebration brought from Finland, on the longest day and the shortest night of the year. In Finland, the sun hardly goes down that night. It just skims the horizon. Celebrating includes a potluck dinner and a bonfire as the sun was going down.

Agate Beach has a campground and picnic area as well as a pavilion. From the Toivola Reunion book I gleaned this information on how Agate Beach Park was formed: For many years, the

township supervisor in the Toivola area was Emil Rahko, whose main concern had been to provide an attractive and large area for visitors and summer use on the shore of Lake Superior. In 1947 he said to the township.. since the state has 300 acres that the taxes have not been paid on along the Lake Superior shoreline, and since shoreline land is becoming difficult to obtain , then why not develop a park on the remaining property. They approved it, the state sold the land to the township for \$1. The land was cleared and timber sold to finance the cost of landscaping and the construction of the hall. The hall was completed 34' x 50' with work done by the local Farmers Union, Temperance Society and Cooperative club. The women had coffee and stew for the workmen. (Emil's wife was Impi Heikkinen. Emil was a farmer, notary public, justice of Peace, supervisor of Stanton Twp and member of St. Mark's Ev. Luth. Church, Toilolan Soihtu Raittiusseura (Temperance Org) and the Cooperative Movement.



Misery Bay is in Ontonagon County.

**A look from its mouth up the Misery River. Before it empties, a long spit of sand separates the river from Lake Superior.**

The specialness of the site is intensified when you experience it alone, which, given its remoteness, you often can.

Superior stays shallow for a long ways out, so this is a fine place for young kids who like the water. This is one place where the water is actually colder as you move up the river than in the lake.

Locals say the river and bay got the name "Misery" because of a bloody battle between two bands of Indians, after which the river ran red.

Vern Simula, who lives nearby, has enjoyed wading across the river and hiking three miles to Wolf Point. It's an undeveloped shoreline, with no cabins. (*—March, 2008*)

*Takes the same road—Misery Bay—that goes from M-26 in Toivola to Agate Beach, but follow the signs to Misery Bay.*



**A woodland path leads to the mouth of the Misery River, a charming, often unpeopled place to linger.**

This remote Lake Superior shoreline spot (Ontonagon County) is yet another low-key Upper Peninsula gem. The cold, clear, briskly moving Misery River winds around into the big lake. There's a DNR boat launch here. At the eastern end of the parking lot, a sandy path through a woods takes you around to the sugar sand beach and the fascinating curl of the river just before it empties into the lake.

Local residents in business: (taken from the 1992 Toivola Reunion document)

Kathryn Salmi – Christian Counseling.

Ted Johnson – Elm River Sugar Bush

John Salmi – Houghton Co., Sheriff

Jingo Vachon –storyteller, author. 1988 Michigan Heritage Award.

Rita Lindgren – Income Tax Service

Yalmer William Mattila – General Contractor

John Lahti foreman for Morrison Lumber Camp

Sawmills – Mike Messnaer, Oscar Fratick, Waino Laskaniemi, John Heikkinen, and Gus Niemi-Yalmer Mattila.

Lumber camps – George Roberts around 1900.

Farmers – Rauvala, Mikkola, Heikkinen, Mattila,

Stores – John and Siina Honkavaara sote 1905 in Toivola.. might have been the same building as John Salmi's Store in Toivola (1920's), Albin Lahikainen's Store, Oscar Wuorinen store/home, Cooperative Movement Store, Frank Wuorinen/Norman Wuorinen/Ben Wuorinen/Jim Laru/Glenn Hayrynen and it burned in 1985, Dale Wuorinen gas station garage business/ Leona Wuorinen had Toivola Lunch. Suksis had store at their farm before the Misery Bay road was built. Mrs. Albert Laurila had a stationery outlet. In homes – Albin Maki, Charlie's Groceries and Kaarlo Wiideman. Agate Beach gas and concession stand Levi Kallioinen. Agate Beach concession managers: Levi Kallioinen, Inpi Rahko, Bob Rogers.

Gas Stations – Sampson's. Lundi.

**Toivola Cemeteries.** From the 1992 Toivola Reunion book...

Old Rink Road Cemetery. Across road from Dick Immonen's property.

Taken from tombstones:

translated: Here rests Keranens baby, Peuhkuri's baby, Linruus's baby

Viijam Luukkonen 1903-1904

Viijam Heikkinen 1887-1904

Eino Loukinen 1901-1901

Present Cemetery.

- Had a 1943 or 1944 dedication of Toivola Honor Roll.

- Newest honor roll was in ? year?

Researched by Barb Koski, Osma Plat Road, Houghton, MI 49931.

More information is desired. Contact the Webmaster. Submitted in 2009.