

## **Freda.**

This community is 17 miles from Houghton on the shores of Lake Superior. It was named for Freda Paine, daughter of William Paine of Boston. The village is situated on top of a cliff of Freda sandstone.

Bill Brinkman files share: The Champion Stamp Mill in Freda was built in 1901-1902 by the Champion Mining Co. in Painesdale. It started operations in 1905 with “6 heads”. In 1935-38 it changed operations to the flotation system.

The stamp mill was located at the bottom of the cliff on the edge of Lake Superior. This property was controlled by the Champion Copper Company (of Painesdale Michigan) which obtained the land and built the stamp milling company to process the copper from its mines. The village grew up around this copper processing mill.

Clarence Monette’s Michigan Name Places shares this about Freda:

The Stamp Mill started operation in 1903. Rock came to Stamp Mill from Painesdale (55 rock cars a day) with 40% pure copper. In 1945 it was the most up to date mill in the world.

Freda Michigan got electricity in 1920, had road plowed first in 1933.

The post office opened 1903 and closed on December 30, 1967.

The stamp mill closed November 4, 1967.

Copper Range Railroad website: In 1971 the 13 miles of Copper Range railroad track were removed, also the salvageable equipment.



*CRRR mogul #55 with a ten car train unloads passengers at Freda Park about 1905. Tyler photo.*

## **Freda Park Trains**

Among the many duties of the Copper Range one was very unique. It was called the Freda Park train. It started in 1905 (Michigan Name Places book shares: first run was June 1907 twice Sunday runs) and ran every Sunday and holidays, carrying as many as 15 coaches and almost three hundred passengers from various parts of the Copper Country to Freda Park, which was located one mile west of the Freda town site. The town of Freda was the stamp mill location for the Champion Copper Company, located in Painesdale. Freda contained 850 people at one time. There were 14 homes along the shore, a 40 room boarding house with as many as 60 boarders. The town had 2 bars, churches, a post office, and a fire department.

The Freda Park train was operated by the Copper Range Railroad for its exclusive use to boost its revenue on the railroad. The train started out from Hancock, crossed the bridge, then turned west in Houghton and ran through the range towns, picking up passengers as it went by. By around 1908 the train extended all the way to Calumet. The railroad added .25 cents to the cost of a regular passenger ticket, making a round-trip ticket cost from Calumet a dollar, .75 cents from Hancock.

Traffic was heavy and revenue was good. It was a sight to see the special train whizzing by at high speed with banners and flags flying from each coach. The picnic fever was evident everywhere. Freda Park hosted dancing on Sunday afternoon, with a live band, and on Saturday's the beer wagon came complete with a team of horses. The beer was kept cool in root houses in the hills.

Freda Park was located one half of a mile from the train depot and was open from 9a.m. to 9p.m. On arrival at the Freda Park, the coaches would unload, and people would remain for the rest of the day on the park grounds. There were huge swings, horseshoe courts, tennis courts, barbecue pits, and a beautiful pavilion concessionaire on the Lake Superior shoreline. The concessionaire was operated by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Jolie. The bathing beach adjacent to the park was a little difficult to walk on because of the millions of beautiful, small, pebbly, smooth, colorful stones that dominated the beach. Things went well for over a decade, but on Labor Day, 1917, (Michigan Name Places book shares it closed Labor Day 1919) the Freda Park closed its doors forever. Why?

This was a railroad park, but automobiles were coming and horning in on its business, taking away many passengers from the train. Instead of coming by train, they came by car, and since the railroad was maintaining the cost of upkeep, the cost was prohibitive and not worth continuing. For those who attended, it will be a happy memory.

A complete structure list for Freda Park was as follows:

Passenger Shelter 10 ft. by 416 ft. · Caretakers house 18x20 · Lunch counter 16x16 · Baggage house 16x16 · Dancing Pavilion 40x98 · Kitchen at Dance Pavilion 24x34 · Ice House · Five stall outhouse

(Above information Related by William Brinkman, from Kevin Musser)

## FREDA

Named for the daughter of a mining company owner, Freda sits on a high sandstone bluff overlooking [Lake Superior](#) west of Houghton. It's one of several Keweenaw shoreline settlements that grew up around a **stamping mill**. Copper mining companies had to take copper-bearing rock brought up from the mines and **concentrate the ore** into much purer ingots which could be **shipped long distances** to customers. This required a stamping plant to grind up the rock. The process used lots of water to separate the copper from other materials, so stamping mills were sited along lakes.

The **Copper Range Company** built the **Freda stamping mill** below the big bluff in 1899. The company also **laid out the village**, built **employee housing**, installed water mains, and created a fire department. By 1910 Freda had 500 residents. Freda's park, long since abandoned, was once a popular weekend destination by train for people in the area. The stamping mill finally closed in 1967, leading to the loss of the Freda post office.

Freda is literally at the **end of the road**. The only way out is back the way you came from Beacon Hill and Redridge. The road to Freda is called **Covered Road** because of the way trees arch over it and form a tunnel. In **fall color season** it's a popular excursion to drive out this way to Freda, enjoy the view, and have a meal or piece of pie at the Superior View Restaurant.

### **SUPERIOR VIEW RESTAURANT (no longer in service)**

This homey spot occupies a cheerfully remodeled old copper company office overlooking [Lake Superior](#). Brothers Clyde and Leo Durocher started the restaurant in 1974. With Leo's death, his wife and Clyde continue to run it today. **Photos from Freda's mining boom** are on the walls, along with pictures of all the sixth-graders Clyde has taught.

The stories taken from Hunts Guide to Michigan's Upper Peninsula web site.

## Salmon Trout.

Clarence Monette in his book *Some Copper Country Names and Places* shares: Salmon Trout was an area of logging in the 1920's, just south of Freda on the Copper Range Railroad.

Logs were retrieved out of the heavy timberlands with horses being more effective, while a large tractor corralled the logs for shipment on the Copper Range Railroad. They went to Michael Messner's landing on Lake Superior.

Taken from web site [www.knaebel.us](http://www.knaebel.us) is this excerpt:

Her first business was from 1941-1944 when Hank and Frieda became the owners of the Beacon Hill Store in Beacon Hill, Michigan which served as a grocery and general store and even provided Saturday night youth dances for residents of both Freda and Beacon Hill.



Champion Stamp Mill in Freda. From Vintage Postcards.

By [Paul in Illinois](#) on **Saturday, September 28, 2002 - 12:49 pm**: on [pasty.com](#) web site:

Yooperrinn covered the basics of mill operations. The Champion Mill at Freda was the only one in the Copper Country to use something other than steam stamps to break native copper rock. They converted it to electric powered impact crushers which were more economical as far as fuel was concerned. Copper Range had very extensive and expensive coal handling facilities during the age of steam. Coal was unloaded at Houghton and then hauled to both the mines and the mills. C&H, Quincy and others had mills on Torch Lake or Portage Lake which were adjacent to their coal docks, they only had to haul coal to the mines, so empty rock cars could be used for the coal. Copper Range with mills on the big lake, had to route cars to Houghton which was one more stop than the competitors. For a more in depth study of Copper Range, click on Kevin Musser's [Copper Range Railroad.org](#) on this home page, it's a great site.





**1932 Freda-Beacon Hill Baseball Team**

Clyde Durocher identified people:

Left to right. Back row: Francis Durocher, Wallace Jolie, Russell Peters, Clarence Durocher, Clyde Salminen, Henry Bilner, Burt Morin Sr.

Mid row: George Allen, Einard Raisanen

Front row: Wally Pumala, Philip Wittala, Norbert Pumula, Doug Salminen, Carl Karkkainen, Albert Morin Sr.



Old Rustic Bridge at Freda Park.

## **Freda Veterans on Honor Roll.**

WW2

Adams, Clarence and John

Aho, Arnold

Alanen, Harold

Alaniva August, Brunold, Clarence and Harold

Allen Albert and George

Asiala Eino, Oliver, Onnie and Veikko

Benbow Francis

Bittner Tom and Jim

Brinkman Alvin, Chester, Violet, William

Brule Francis

Durocher Ben and Roland

Eakin William

Faller Nicholas and William

Hakala Leo

Hannula Paul, Ronald, and Hubert Sr.

Heltunen Albin

Hillmer Raymond

Hiltunen Einard, Waino, and Walter

Jolie Wallace

Juntunen Richard and Waino

Kangas Wesley

Kantola Eino, Kosti, and Richard

Karkkainen Arnold Carlo and Ralph

Keturi George

Koivu Edward and Robert

Linna Waino

Loukinen Charles and Frank

Lukkarila Eino and Waino

Luoma Aaron

Makela Wilhart

Morin Earl and Vincent

Myllyota Miriam

Nissen Norbert

Pekkala Frank, and William

Peters Raymond, Russell and Veronica

Puumala, Albert, George, Norbert, Walfred, Wallie and Walter

Raisanen Carlo, Eion, Emil, Herbert, and Ernest

Rajala Francis, Melvin, Reino, Vivien, Wallace

Salminen Clyde

Simonson Erland, Wilfred

Sten Harold

Timonen Eino and Emil

Winter Henry

## KOREA

Asiala, Eino, Uno, Veikko and Wilho  
Brinkman Andrew and Paul  
Guilbault Clarence and Frances  
Hauswith, Alan  
Hiltunen, Earl  
Honkanen, Albert and Donald  
Keturi, Kenneth  
Koskela, Roy  
Nissen, John  
Raisanen, Arvo and Melvin  
Sten, Robert.

## VIETNAM

Asiala Veikko and Wilho  
Durocher, Donald and James  
Fraki, Dennis  
Hilmer, Philip  
Hyttinen, Clyde  
Karkkainen, Steven  
Kommes, Peter  
Leonhard, Mark, Tomothy, Wayne  
Littinen, Ernest  
Luoma, Leonard  
Morin James  
Peters Marolyn  
Sten, Allen  
Vitton, John Jr.

Birth certificate in Stanton Township Hall

Fred and Anna Stefanich had son James.

Jerry Stefanich (school teacher at Redridge and EB Holman) said Fred was his uncle.  
Fred was head boss of the Freda Mill.

Barb Koski interviewed Freida in 2008. Her comments are below:

Frieda Durocher Guilbault at Douglas House shares: I grew up in Freda and Beacon Hill. My dad worked in the Freda mill. At the beginning the mill “stamped” the rock to get out the copper.. then technology created a “crusher”. My dad worked on lower of 3 floors of the mill called the “wash”. My husband also worked at the mill.

I have written a book.. Growing up in the Michigan Copper Country 1908-1925. It is on sale in the gift shop of the Douglas House.

I will be 100 years old on August 14, but on the 9th there is an open house for me from 1-4 at the Rozsa.

I knew your mother in law June Fratick Koski and her family.. son Clark more than the others.. I worked at the Broemer Store and our family lived down the road from the Koskis.



- I was born 1908 in Freda Michigan to Eva Perrault Durocher and Edmund Durocher. My 100th birthday is in August 2008.
- My brothers are: Edwin b. 1910, Harvey b. 1913, Floyd b. 1916, Garfield b. 1918, Robert, Gordon, Benedict.
- My sisters are: Irene b. 1902, Bertha b. 1904 and lived 18 months, Doris b. 1906
- We lived in Beacon Hill and or Freda 1908-1912 and 1921-1925
- I married Henry Guilbault.
- My husband and I had a room and boarding facility across from MTU in 1945+
- My children are: Marjorie Russell, Gwen Knaebel, Carm Meyers and Rodney.
- Rodney married Lee Burkman's daughter. Lee shared that she and Freida lived next to each other in Redridge or was it Freda?

- Copper Range train took people to Freda. There were 3 passenger trains. 1- was the school train to Painesdale at 7:30 AM. 1- at 10:30 was passenger and freight (for store, mill, and families). 1- was at 5:30 PM Painesdale to Freda.

On weekends 3 trains went to Freda Park each day. People went to picnic, socialize and enjoy music/entertainment.

- Many people ordered groceries, clothing and furniture from catalogs.. Sears and Roebuck, and Montgomery Ward.

- The Freda Stamp Mill.

The train would dump rock cars through the top level where rock bins were.

Open hatch. Stamp heads crushed rock below.

Below was the machine shop and ball mills.

A ball mill was 6 foot in diameter of cast iron. They pulverized the rock. Inside had dozens of the iron balls the size of baseballs. They rotated like cement mixer yielding find sand. That was mixed with water.

Bottom floor is "wash". Copper is extracted here from the sand on tables that shook. The table had ridges. It sloped and tilted. The sand sludge went out to Lake Superior.

Copper was put in buckets. Buckets put on a trolley to railroad cars and taken to smelter. Smelter melted the copper into ingots. Ingots shipped by rail to boat to all parts of USA.

In her Douglas House Apartment Lee Burkman and I stopped by after a summer music program. I bought her book. She showed me her family photos and a treasure of a locket with her mom's? hair twisted into the necklace "chain".

On web [www.knaebel.us](http://www.knaebel.us) Barb found this: (pictures of her birthday party are on the web site.



**HOUGHTON - Frieda Durocher Guilbault died on Thursday, March 12, 2009 at 100 years.**

Frieda Durocher Guilbault was born in Freda, Michigan on August 14, 1908 to Eva Perreault Durocher and Edmund Durocher. After elementary school, she took the train from Freda to Painesdale to attend high school. She loved riding the train and going to Painesdale High School. She particularly admired the Jeffers for whom the school is now named. Following high school, she worked in Houghton, married Henry (Hank) Guilbault and returned to Freda to begin her married life surrounded by family and friends.

Vital and active until she suffered a recent stroke, Frieda lived independently at the Douglas House Apartments in Houghton supported by her family and with dedicated and loving assistance from Portage Home Services and Portage Home Health. She died while under the expert care of medical professionals and surrounded by her family.

Her death comes less than a year after celebrating her 100th birthday on August 14, 2008. With Frieda as the star attraction, family members and friends gathered to party and enjoy a two week series of events in Houghton which were highlighted by a stunning afternoon reception at the Rozsa Center at Michigan Tech and concluded with a celebration Mass at St. Ignatius Loyola Church in Houghton.

“Frieda leaves a legacy of inspiration to all who knew her at any time during her life. Her life was lived filled with the pleasure of being a wife, cook and homemaker, mother, business woman, grandmother, great grandmother, great-great grandmother, author and friend to all. She made life itself and warm interpersonal relationships an art form. In the past year as she approached and celebrated her 100th birthday she inspired all with whom she came in contact to live their lives to the fullest. Many have lost a friend and mentor but her joy and zest for life will live in all of us.” Gwen Guilbault Knaebel.

Frieda focused her life and her career around her love for food and cooking. She is the author of two published works. The first is a cookbook. The following quote is from Frieda's Favorite Recipes: A collection of Frieda Durocher Guilbault's favorite recipes from the Copper Country in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. "My lifelong interest in cooking and baking began when I was very young. I learned to cook with a pinch of this and a pinch of that."

Her second, a booklet, makes a significant contribution to Copper Country history. At the age of 95 she penned an insightful account about her early life. Titled Growing Up in Michigan's Copper Country 1908-1925, although it is her special story, her experiences were typical of numerous others who, like her, grew up in the mine and mill towns during the boom years of Michigan's Copper Country.

Her two books are available at the Portage Lake District Library and at bookstores in Houghton and Calumet.

Her first business was from 1941-1944 when Hank and Frieda became the owners of the Beacon Hill Store in Beacon Hill, Michigan which served as a grocery and general store and even provided Saturday night youth dances for residents of both Freda and Beacon Hill.

In 1945 Hank and Frieda moved their family to Houghton where they owned and operated an apartment, rooming and dining facility on Blanche Street. Their clientele was primarily servicemen returning from the World War II to attend Michigan Tech. They continued to provide housing and food service for Michigan Tech students until 1963 when they left the Copper Country while Hank worked on the Barkley Dam in Kentucky.

When they returned to the Copper Country in 1966 they settled in Chassell where they owned and operated the Northwoods Motel until their retirement when they moved back to Houghton.

Following Hank's death, Frieda moved to the Douglas House Apartments in Houghton where she resided for over a decade. There she enjoyed her charming apartment, the consideration of the owners and staff and the companionship of her fellow apartment dwellers. She particularly enjoyed the convenient downtown location that facilitated many visits from her close extended family and her many friends.

For many of her years at the Douglas House she nurtured the flowers in the window boxes on the exterior of the building keeping the petunias beautiful all during their growing season. Frieda also planted a beautiful flower garden on Isle Royale Street next to the Douglas House. In 1997 she received a Special Beautification Award from the City of Houghton for innovative and imaginative beautification of downtown Houghton.

Frieda was highlighted in the recently published 2008 Portage Health Annual Report to the Community. The article, with her picture, is available on the internet at [Portage Home Health Care Services](#)

Frieda was preceded in death by her parents, three sisters, Bertha, Irene Hall and Doris Hansen and six brothers Robert, Garfield, Floyd, Harvey, Edwin, by her husband Henry (Hank)

Guilbault and in the past year, by brother Ben Durocher of Lake Linden and grandson Rick Meyers of Boston, Massachusetts.

She is survived by four children, daughters, Marjorie (John) Russell, Davis, California; Gwen (Gene) Knaebel, Redding, California; Carm (Don) Meyers, Houghton; son, Rodney (Debra) Guilbault, Houghton; brother Gordon (Phyllis) Durocher of Colgate, Wisconsin and sister-in-law June Durocher, Lake Linden.

She is also survived by thirteen grandchildren, thirty great-grandchildren, eight great-great-grandchildren, and many close and loving nieces, nephews and cousins from both her and her husband's families, special family John, Joni & Anna Meyers and many loving friends and countless fond acquaintances.

**Topics heard:**

- Edgemere community family member, Wilhart Heltunen, son of Able and Matilda, was killed in the Freda Stamp Mill.