

Redridge.

Clarence Monette in his book **Some Copper Country Names and Places** shares: Redridge was organized in the early 1900's. It had a population of over 700 people. It had two copper stamp mills running to capacity and had the largest steel dam on the continent.

There was a community called Salmon Trout in 1894, (located a bit south of Redridge on the Copper Range Railroad) which was taken from the name of the river. (Sometime before 1910 the name changed to Redridge. {Geocities.com})

One stamp mill (east of the Salmon Trout River) was the Atlantic which was purchased by the Lake Superior Iron and Metal Company in 1917 and demolished and hauled to Ripley by the Copper Range Railroad. Many hundred tons of machinery were transported.

Bill Brinkman, resident of Redridge and historian, shares: There were two stamp mills in Redridge. One was the Atlantic Stamp Mill (east of the river) with ore from the Atlantic Mine in Atlantic Michigan. The other was the Baltic Stamp Mill (west side of river) with ore from the Baltic Mine in Baltic Michigan.

The **Atlantic Stamp Mill** was the oldest stamp mill on the east side of Redridge. It was built in 1891-92. It started production in 1892 with "2 heads". In 1895 it was in full production with "6 heads". The mill used wood for fuel until 1896 and then used coal. The mill closed in 1912. (Ore was brought to the stamp mill on the new Atlantic and Lake Superior Railroad. The 3 miles of the Covered drive off Coles Creek Road is the bed of that railroad company.)

(The Atlantic Mining Company built 23 homes from 1894-1898 along with a store warehouse, schoolhouse, barn, and superintendent's home. From 1899-1910 6 more frame homes were built and boarding house, ice house, doctor's office, new barn and new store. The Atlantic Mining Company had been in operation for 23 years before it built its mill at Redridge. They operated a stamp mill on the shores of Portage Lake near Coles' Creek {Geocities.com})

The **Baltic Stamp Mill** was on the west side of Redridge. It was built in 1901-1902 and had "6 heads". The first Mill Superintendent was William H. Schacht (shot). And the 2nd was Otis D. Fellows. The home of the Fellows still stands, privately owned. (The home is on the north side of the road going to Freda, just west of the road named Edgemere Lane. This lane does not go to Edgemere but to the Baltic mill. Respect private property.) Treasurer/Secty was Frederick Stanwood. Stanwood died November 30, 1916. The mill closed in 1922. (Stanwood was an area near today's Messner Road and Edgemere as I understand. It had a train platform for passengers on the Copper Range Co. train.)

Redridge Dam (sources: Bill Brinkman photos, Wikipedia.org, geocities.com, copperrange.org/redridge.htm and connecting links)

The first dam was wooden and built by the Atlantic Mining Co. on the Salmon Trout River in 1891-92 to serve water for their stamp mill.

It was a timber crib filled with loose rock and dirt, 53 feet wide at the bottom and 28 feet wide at the top. It was 50 feet high. The timbers were 14 inches thick and hewed flat that were connected with one-inch drift bolts. The upstream face was lined with four- inch plank and covered in two-inch plank.

There were two 24" drainpipes that were used to fill and drain the pond behind the dam as needed.

The water went to the Stamp Mill, 1/2 mile away, in launders that were 18" by 36".

The second dam:

The steel dam was built for use for only a short period of time between 1890 and 1910.

There were only 3 steel dams in the US during that time. One dam was in Hawser Lake Montana (it no longer exists), the other in Ash Forks Arizona for the Santa Fe Railroad (it still exists). Redridge was the largest of all the dams.

Wikipedia states: Most sources indicate it was one of only three such dams constructed in the United States, the other two being the Ashfork-Bainbridge Steel Dam (1898, Arizona) and the Hauser Lake Dam (1901, Montana), the last of which failed within a year of construction. The Redridge Dam was designed by J. F. Jackson and built by the Wisconsin Bridge and Iron Company. The old timber crib dam remained in place, submerged, upstream of the steel dam. A system of spillways, sluices (or *launders* as they are referred to in contemporary texts), and pipes brought water downhill to the stamp mills).

Clarence Monette shares in his book *Some Copper Country Names and Places*: This dam (steel) was 475 feet in length and was flanked by wings of 350 feet and 200 feet, respectively, on the east and west. It is classified as a steel gravity dam. The project required 8,000 cubic yards of concrete and one million pounds of steel. When filled, it held some billion and a quarter gallons of water. (This amount of water was sufficient for taking care of 5000 tons of ore {both mills} every day of the year except for Sundays.)

For a period of time, the wooden dam was completely submerged.

A memory of Charlotte Smith – English. She lived with her parents Guy and Nellie Smith in Redridge 1929-1939 while her mom taught at the school. Nellie grew up in Liminga as Nellie Heikkila, daughter of Michael and Riita. (Charlotte's mom is sister to Ozzie Koski's {husband of author} grandmother)

Sometime in the late 1930's, I went swimming in the swimming hole. We had lots of rain and the spillway was next to our swimming hole. The water was very swift on the day this occurred.

One girl, daughter of Bill Raisanen I think, got pulled into the water and down the spillway. There was a waterfall where it came out at the end. A boy, Simonson I think, (they lived down that way) went in after her and dragged her out. She was badly injured. She could not have gotten out by herself.

The house we lived in got torn down in 1945 or 1946.

The need for the dams ended with closing of the Stamp Mills, the longest working one being the Baltic in 1931.

In 1943 Copper Range, which controlled the Atlantic and Baltic by this time, opened the discharge valves to keep it from cresting and washing out the county road below during the spring seasons as it occasionally did.

In 1979 Copper Range cut four 4 x 8 foot long holes in the steel dam to further eliminate any danger from flooding, and in the process returned the wooded dam to it's designed function of holding back water.

Wikipedia states: The dam operated for several decades, until the mines closed. After that

time, the dam was no longer maintained. On Easter morning of 1941, the spillway behind the dam broke, causing a flood. There was little damage to the steel part of the dam, but with the mining operations stopped, the dam owners had the spillway valves opened.

However there were still incidents of overtopping, and the Copper Range Company (successor to Atlantic Mine Company and owner of the dam) had large holes cut in it in 1979 so that it would not retain water. This lowered the level of the reservoir, revealing the earlier timber dam.

Ownership of the dam was transferred to Stanton Township in 1992.

Fears that the timber dam might fail and Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality considering the dam a "significant hazard" forced the township to consider renovating the dam in 2001. Five options were proposed for a long term fix for the dam. These options ranged from repairing the steel and wooden dams for \$311,000 to restoring/ reconstructing the entire structure for over a million dollars. Stanton Township could not afford to do any of the proposed options, so another option was sought out. A short term fix was found to make the dam safer. The upper 13 feet of the wooden structure was removed in 2004 to bring the water level down and relieve some of the pressure. (See photo section)


A more permanent repair is still needed. A recent study by a team of students from Michigan Technological University determined that both dams are likely to remain safe for the foreseeable future.

In 1985 the dam was designated as a Michigan Historic Civil Engineering Landmark.

April 2, 1992 the dam was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. See photo section.

Walter Greive drown in the Redridge Dam August 18, 1928. He was 21 years old. His parents were Albert and Mary Grieve. (Death Certificate of Stanton Township web site). Two others drown in the pond, and one from suicide.



ID Number	5710
Description	Redridge Steel Dam. (HAER, MICH,31-BEHIL,1-1)
Source	 HAER: Redridge Steel Dam, Salmon Trout River, Beacon Hill, Houghton County, MI
Copyright Notice	
This image is part of the public domain and may be used freely. Please list the original source and the name of the photographer listed here if you do use this image.	

This image is linked to the following structures & large-scale projects:

s0001384: Redridge Steel Dam (1901) Redridge (MI) 

The Polk Directory of 1897 says: Redridge. Population 200. In Hancock Township. (1903 Polk has population of 450). (Stanton Township separated from Hancock Township in 1902)

In 1897 mail was delivered daily. The first postmaster was Albert Everett.

The community had:

- Atlantic Mining Company general store.

“The original store was located north and east of the School – across the street. Ken Simonson later ran a small store and post office out of a building that was located near the current mail box site on the main road.” Don Heikkila shared.

- The Atlantic Stamp Mill
- Frederick G Coggin was Superintendent of the Company. Albert Everett was manager.
- CP Hulce was school teacher, as was Miss Mahon.
- Thomas Kneebone was blacksmith.
- Gottlieb Brockmiller and John Walter were carpenters.

In the 1903 Polk Directory the community had listed:

- Congregational Church.
- Telephone connection.
- Henry F. Key is Superintendent of the Adventure Mining Co. Stamp Mill (in Edgemere).
- Coggins is still Superintendent of Atlantic Mining Co. Stamp Mill and the Baltic Mining Co. Stamp Mill.
- JH Vincent is physician.
- Nicholas Burkman (grew up in Oskar) has a hotel.

MARRIAGES

1901 September 11 Wednesday–

Antoine GABE, of Redridge married Miss Mary McMAHON of Franklin Township, at St Patrick’s Catholic Church, Hancock yesterday morning, the bride was attended by her sister, Miss Bridget McMAHON and the groom by his brother as best man.

Their future home will be at Redridge location. (She was Redridge School teacher)

Baltic Employees in log homes in 1905 were:

Edward Gries, Richard Harry, Matt Heltonen, Johns Johnson, Matt Koski, Uria Kukkonen, Alex Lanctot, Fred Meheaux, Matt Murisoja, John Ollila, Erick Salmi, Sam Tapio, Simon Simonson, and Clovic Terrian.

Baltic Employees in wood frame homes in 1905 were:

Lewis Bowers, Alex Campbell, William Carlisle, Dr. Cole, Herman Cohn, Joseph Everett, John Daily, Anton Gabe- Company Electrician, Charles Kensell Thomas Kneebone, Matt Laalaja, John McDonald, Fred Mehring, Steve Polkinghorne G Schneider, Archie Stevens, William Trehwalla, and Ben Walters.

Redridge Boarding house of 1907 housed 40 men. It was east across the road from the Redridge School. It later became the home of August Kaiser, a janitor of the Redridge School. His home burned January 29, 1939 in a blizzard. A photo of the ruins is in the photo section. Does anyone have a photo of the boarding house?

Blue Ribbon Tavern was just west of Redridge and a half mile south into the woodlands. Barb was told it was down the train track of Copper Range just west of Redridge and south on the Messner Road. This is the area that once was called Stanwood. When the tavern was closed, "Old Nick" was the caretaker of the property until he died in 1930. What was his name? Does anyone have more information on this tavern?

The Copper Country Chapter 5 History of Finns in Michigan (Armas Holmio) shares: Although Redridge did not have a saloon, drunkenness and wild living prevailed, especially among the young people. The non drinking Finns organized a **Temperance Society** to combat these evils, naming it the Nuorison Kaunistus (Beauty of the North), reflecting their own noble thoughts. Does anyone know where the temperance hall was located?

A small Suomi Synod church stands empty in Redridge as a memorial to the Finns. (No longer standing in 2009. See photo section)

Brinkman continues:

The **company doctor's office and dispensary** could be found between the Finnish Lutheran Church and the school. It was built in 1901 as a wood frame structure, 2 stories high. It was painted white. It had 4 rooms on first floor and 2 rooms on second floor. The doctor traveled by horse and buggy, horse and sled, or train. Dr. Henry E. Johnson served 1918-1932.

Ice cutting on Redridge Dam.

Ice was 3 feet deep. People used crosscut or a special toothed saw operated by a crosspiece and pushed and pulled for cutting the huge pieces. Harvest was often 150 ton for Beacon Hill store and 100 tons for the Redridge market. Farmers got about 10-15 ton. Cubes were loaded on sleighs and taken by horses to farm ice houses and company stores. Electricity did not come until the 1930's.

Fire burned ¼ of town on May 3, 1937. Five fire departments responded but Hurontown's was the only effective department as they could suck water from the dam.

Floods in Redridge were common each spring. Bad ones were in 1904 and April 1941.

In the late 1950s a large tunnel was constructed under the current roadway to allow the Salmon Trout River to flow freely toward the lake. Prior to this, I think there were large culverts but in the spring the river's flow increased to a point where serious flooding and damage to the road and community were possible.

Roads:

See picture below for location of roads. The first road over the Salmon Trout River was

located at the Extension of today's road just north of today's road, which goes thru private property now (Respect Private Property). It was the walking and horse and buggy bridge.

This photo also documents the changes that occurred to the road running through Redridge. The path marked in red was the first road through built in 1892. At first this road had no bridge over the river; people had to portage across it. A bridge made of wood was built on this road in 1895-96 to accommodate horse and buggies. The road was closed in 1919 and a new one (the one marked in green) replaced it. This road was built by pumping water from the dam into a huge earth and sand bank and the resulting mud flowed down launders into the ravine, where pipes had been placed to allow the river to flow underneath the roadway. The current road (marked with yellow) was completed in 1980 for a cost of around \$480,000. Since this road was built after the Copper Range Company had cut holes in the dam, the contractors simply covered over the part of the spillway that was in the path of the road.



School:

Barb Koski has a Gazette picture of the Liminga School which states “The Liminga School in 1910 was ... dominated by the stern disciplinarian Miss St. Germain, who later became principal of the Redridge School. See her photo in Schools section.

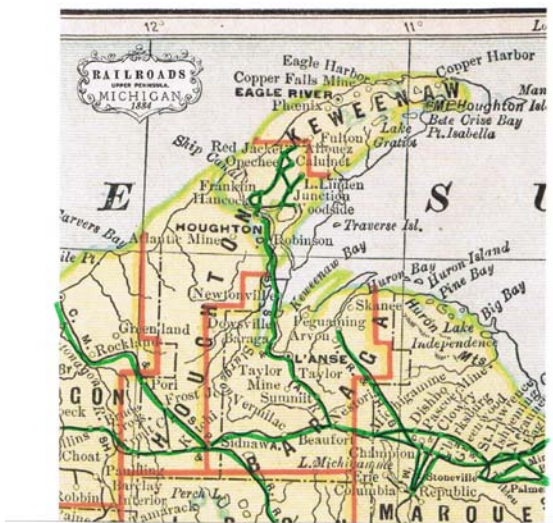
“This photo (below) came from a postcard prior to 1910 of the schoolhouse in Redridge. Hard to believe this building still stands in Redridge. It comes to us from Bob Bice who was kind enough to send me a CD filled with wonderful postcards from the Keweenaw. Bob's father went to this school until the 6th grade until he had to quit school and start working at the Baltic Mill in Redridge. Bob also had the privilege of riding the Atlantic and Lake Superior Railroad (This is the road we call the Covered Drive and went to the Atlantic Stamp Mill) as a boy and a while ago he sent me a pass from that railroad, first one I had ever seen and I can't thank him enough as the A&LS is my second favorite after the Copper Range. Thank you so much Bob for your contributions to this site and please stop back as I will be displaying all the postcards he sent, many of which I have never seen before.” states Kevin Musser on the Copper Range website.



See the section on Stanton Township Schools for more information on Schools in Redridge.

Railroads: See picture of tracks.

In 1884:



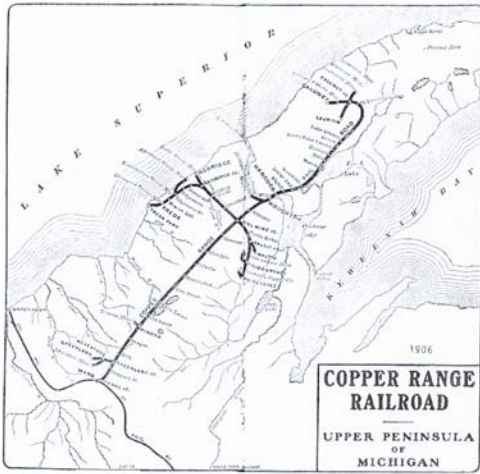
Houghton and Keweenaw Counties (Baraga came along!)

1884

Railroads Upper Peninsula, Michigan

Published in 1884 by The Wilton Smith Co. Detroit, Michigan

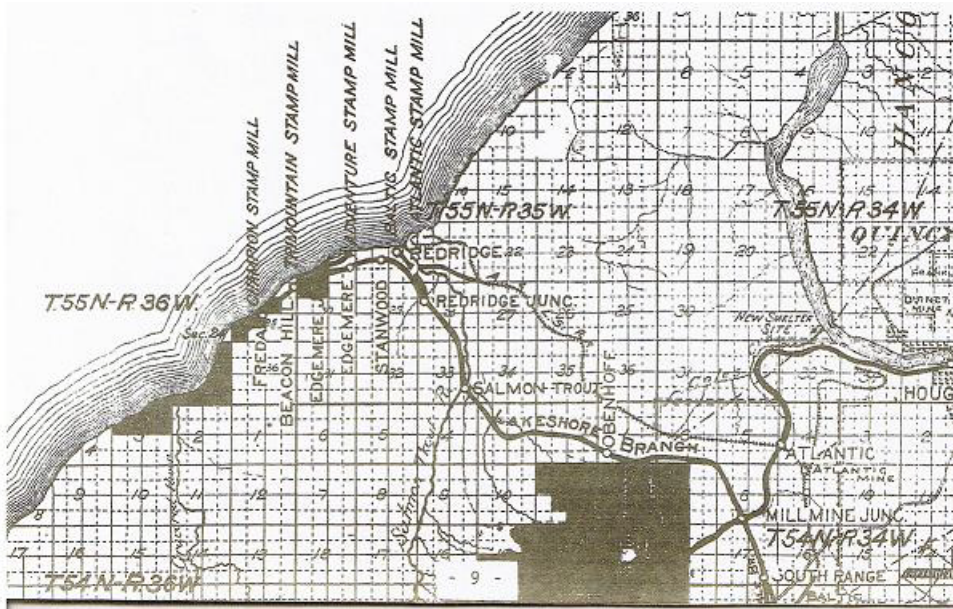
Railroads are in Green.



<http://www.copperrange.org/map.gif>

3/24/2009

1906.



Copper Range Railroad came from Mill Mine Junction near Atlantic Mine. It brought mine rock from the Baltic Mine to the Baltic Stamp Mill on a spur. The spur from the main line came into Redridge crossing today's Liminga/Freda Road just west of the Redridge Dam/Salmon

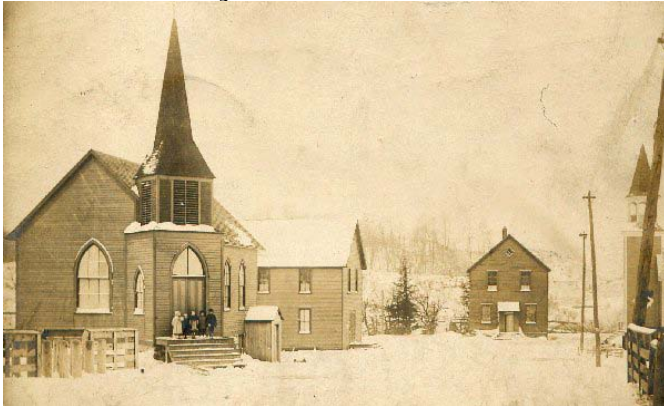
Trout River. It crossed the road north to the Baltic mill at this location.. (possible it is the Edgemere Lane road today). The main line went to Freda with one spur, at least, to the Adventure Mine Stamp Mill in Edgemere. Barb has not studied Beacon Hill and Freda tracks.

Barb Koski's husband Ozzie's Grandmother Esther Heikkila Koski told Barb "I would take this train to town by going down this trail which was a Railroad track then". (She points south into the woods at this crossing). The spur here then goes back along the main track to Mill Mine Junction and then North to town or South to Chicago on connections with other railroad companies.

Churches.

Postcard collection of Robert Bice.

This view is of the Congregational Church in Redridge. The Finnish Evangelical Church can be seen on the right. The Woodmen's Hall is directly behind the Congregational Church. The larger part of this collection are tinted photographs (sold as postcards) taken by D. D. Scott in the early 1900's most in the Calumet area.



Redridge Community Time Line. From information gathered:

1888. -William Brinkman Sr. builds log home raises 11 children.

1891-1893

- First called Salmon Trout. Later Red Ridge. Later with post office became Redridge.
- President Joseph E. Gay of Atlantic Mining Company found it difficult to comply with Government regulations depositing stamp sands into Portage Lake. (at Cowles/Coles Creek). It was decided to transfer the stamping process to a point in Redridge, build 9 miles of railroad and create a stamp mill in 1893 and village taking shape in 1893. The mill was called Atlantic Stamp Mill. It operated from 1891-1913. The old stamp sands were reclaimed. See photo section.
- Frank McMillian Stanton, agent, in 1893 reported that mill is 300 feet back from shore, 1,300 feet east from mouth, 20-30 feet above Lake Superior.
- Company built 4 log homes from trees cut from railroad and mill site.
- Mill operates with 2 "heads".

1891-92

- Wooden dam built for the Atlantic Stamp Mill.
- First road built on the Salmon Trout River. It went through the water.

1894.

- 8 more log homes built and 2 wood frame houses.
- School operated in a home for 1 year. Another source says: The first school of Redridge was in 1892 in the Saltzer home and was constructed of logs. It had a single room and housed 8 grades.
(1897 Polk Directory shares: Miss Mahon and CP Hulce were school teachers in Redridge.)

1895

- Wooden bridge/road over the Salmon Trout River until 1919. Road built closer to the dam.
- Removal of operations from Cowles Creek accomplished. Began in 1893 under direction of Frank M. Stanton, agent. Frank was the son of John Stanton, Director of Company and namesake of the Township name.
- 10 more dwellings built.
- First school house by river built. Between town and launder (water to dispose of mill tailings). Closed in 1905.
- Full operation of Atlantic Mill with 6 “heads” stamping.

1896. -Atlantic Mining Company store built.

1897- Mail delivered daily.

1899

- 6 more homes built.
- Baltic Mining Co. came. The mill was built in 1900 along with homes. John Stanton was Company President and Baltic Capt. (Namesake of Township name)

1900

- 4 more homes built.
- Boarding house built. Sold in 1907 to Kaiser family. It burned Jan. 29, 1939.
- Office built.
- Drinking water from obtained from artesian well.

1901

- Atlantic ice house built.
- Dr. Office built.
- Frank M. Stanton is agent for Baltic and Atlantic. (Son of John)
- Stamp Mill had 3 heads installed.
- Atlantic and the new Baltic Mining Company completed a gravity steel dam, which increased the water capacity needed for operating both mills.
- Redridge’s hey- day was between 1901 and 1912. The population was 1,100 people.

1902. -Stanton Township forms. Built new road from Redridge to Freda.

1903. – Rose Miller was teacher at Redridge School.

1904 – Flood in Redridge from the dam.

1905

- Repairs done on earlier homes.
- Baltic Company school built. Known as Redridge School in operation until Dec. 1972.
Had picket fence for first 20 years.
- The old school was purchased by Catholics and converted into a church which burned on May 3, 1937. See photo section for picture of old school.

1906

- John Stanton, director and officer of Company since organization died Feb. 23, 1906.
Replaced by John R. Stanton. (son). Co. President replacement was Wm. Paine.
(Painesdale)
- Michigan Smelts began. Atlantic Stamp Mill brought their copper there.
- Frank M. Stanton reports mine too dangerous for men and operations.
- Atlantic Stamp Mill stack collapsed in April necessitating replacement.

1907 – Redridge boarding house had 40 residents.

1908 – Redridge School was built and remained open until 1972.

1909.

- 30-40 high school students in Redridge, Freda, Obenhoff rode the Copper Range Railroad school train to Painesdale High School until June 1942.

1911.

- Company store rebuilt after forest fire destroyed first.
- Copper Range acquired property of Atlantic Mine Co. and Atlantic and Lakeshore Railroad.

1912.

- Atlantic Stamp Mill closed.

1916.

- Pedestrian bridge built over Salmon Trout River. (Another source says it was built in 1896.
Maybe one was the suspension bridge) See photo section.
- First automobile came to Redridge on July 4th. In it were John R. Stanton and brother in law
Dr. J C Moore.
- Frederick Stanwood dies. Secty/Treas of Baltic Stamp Mill.

1917. -Atlantic Co. dissolved due to costs. Rock went to Freda to be stamped.

1918 – Dr. Henry E Johnson comes to be doctor for the Baltic Mining Co.

1919 – New road built nearer the dam. Current road built in 1980.

1920 – There was a suspension bridge over the Salmon Trout River for people. It was between the candy store and the Baltic Mill as a shortcut for the workmen.

1922 -Baltic Mill idle. Dismantled in 1942.

1924 – Sand train took stamp sand to Baltic Mine (another source says it went to Freda) for reclamation. This was done as well on the old Atlantic Stamp Sands at Cole’s Creek.

1927 – Bill Brinkman begins his 27 year teaching principal career at Redridge School.

1928 – A drowning on the reservoir. Walter Greive.

1932.

-Frederick Coggin Jr. home / mansion dismantled with Supt. Engles. He was Supt of Atlantic Mill.

- Henry E Johnson is no longer the Doctor.

1937 -Community fire. May 3.

1939

-The last week of January, Redridge had a 4 day winter storm.

- The Redridge boarding house burned to the ground.

1941 – Easter Sunday the dam flooded over the top.

1979 – Holes cut in the dam. This lowered the level of the reservoir, revealing the earlier timber Dam.

1980 – Current road built over the Salmon Trout River.

1985 – Steel dam was designated as a Michigan Historic Civil Engineering Landmark.

1992

- Ownership of the dam was transferred to Stanton Township.

- The steel dam listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

2004 - The upper 13 feet of the wooden structure was removed in 2004 to bring the water level down and relieve some of the pressure.

See photos of Redridge.

Author Barb Yeakel/Koski Osma Plat Road, Houghton MI

Submitted in 2009.

Barb welcomes stories about Redridge. Contact her or the webmaster.