

Keweenaw National Historical Park

**National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**



FINDING AID

Sanborn Map Company Insurance Map Collection

1900-1928, with later revisions (bulk dates: 1917-1928, with later revisions)

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HISTORY

The Sanborn Map Company began making fire insurance maps in 1867 when founded by Daniel Alfred Sanborn, a surveyor from Somerville, Massachusetts. Sanborn was headquartered in Pelham, New York (later in New York City), and had regional offices in San Francisco and Chicago. The Sanborn Company sent out legions of surveyors to record building footprints and other details of building construction, as well as other information helpful for insurance agents in determining fire liability in over 12,000 communities in the US. The extreme detail and high degree of accuracy that made the Sanborn maps so useful to insurance agents historically also make them an invaluable tool for researchers today.

The Sanborn maps are large-scale lithographed street plans at a scale of 50 feet to one inch (1:600) printed on 21-inch by 25-inch sheets of paper. The maps were folded in half and bound in volumes, which were updated periodically until new volumes were produced. Maps for larger cities were bound in multiple volumes. Updates, referred to as 'slips,' were produced as new, small drawings of new or altered buildings or lots and sent out to be pasted into the latest volume, on top of the old maps, as an economical means to maintain accuracy.

The Sanborn maps contain a wealth of information. They are organized as such: firstly, a decorative title page, an index of streets and addresses, a 'specials' index with the names of churches, schools, businesses, etc, and a master index indicating the entirety of the mapped area and the sheet numbers for each large-scale map (usually depicting four to six blocks) and general information such as population, economy, and prevailing wind direction. The maps include outlines of each building and outbuilding, including open and enclosed porches, the location of windows and doors, the height of buildings, street names, street and sidewalk widths, property boundaries, fire walls, natural features (rivers, lakes, etc), railroad corridors, building use (sometimes even particular room uses), current (at the time of production) and past house, lot, and block numbers, as well as the composition of building materials including the framing, flooring, and roofing materials, the strength of the local fire department, indications of sprinkler systems, locations of fire hydrants, location of water and gas mains and even the names of most public buildings, churches and companies.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

Sanborn Map Company Insurance Map Collection
1900-1928, with later revisions (bulk dates: 1917-1928, with later revisions)

CATALOG NUMBER	KEWE 2203
VOLUME	9 EA
DESCRIPTION	<p>The Sanborn Map Company Insurance Map Collection is an artificial collection of insurance maps of communities in the west-central Upper Peninsula of Michigan dating from 1900 to 1928, with later revisions.</p> <p>Communities represented include Calumet (formerly Red Jacket) (Mohawk, Allouez, Ahmeek, Copper City, Blue Jacket, Yellow Jacket, Centennial Heights, Tamarack, Swedetown, Gay, Newtown, Kearsarge, North Kearsarge, South Kearsarge, Wolverine), Ewen, Hancock (Ripley, Dollar Bay, Point Mills, Mason), Houghton (Huron town, Atlantic, Chassell, South Range, Baltic, Trimountain, Painesdale, Redridge, Edgemere, Beacon Hill, Freda), L'Anse, Laurium (Florida), Marquette, Ontonagon (White Pine), and Red Jacket (Blue Jacket, Florida, Laurium, Newtown, Swedetown, Tamarack, Yellow Jacket).</p> <p>Insurance agents or agencies to whom the maps are historically known to have been loaned by the Sanborn Map Company include James T. Healy, W. A. LeDuc Agency, and Jack H. Ruhl.</p>
ORGANIZATION	[Organization]Maps in the collection are not arranged hierarchically. [Arrangement]Maps in the collection are arranged alphabetically by the name of the primary community represented in each.
PROVENANCE	Maps in this collection were all originally produced and owned by the Sanborn Map Company (and its predecessor companies, including the Sanborn-Perris Map Company, Limited). Historically, the maps were loaned by the Sanborn Map Company to various

insurance agents or agencies, including James T. Healy, W. A. LeDuc Agency, and Jack H. Ruhl. In later years, the architectural firm of John Roger Johansen used the maps of Hancock (1928), Houghton (1928), L'Anse (1922), Laurium (1917), Marquette (1917), and Ontonagon (1928). Johansen's associate Page Onge acquired the maps when the office closed in 1987, and donated them to Keweenaw NHP when he left the area in 1999.

The agent or agency to which the map of Red Jacket (1900) was historically loaned is unknown, but in later years, Professor Harold A. Meeks, who was a professor of Geography at Michigan Technological University from 1954 to 1964, acquired the map from some unknown source. His widow, Mildred J. Meeks, donated the map to Keweenaw NHP in 2006.

RESTRICTIONS

NO

ASSOCIATED MATERIALS

PDF and printed copies of microfilm scans of all Sanborn Maps for the four-county Copper Country area are included in the KEWE Library Collection.

CONTAINER LIST**Box 1**

Calumet 1928

Hancock 1928 (2 copies)

Houghton 1928

Box 2

L'Anse 1922

Laurium 1917

Marquette 1917

Ontonagon 1928

Red Jacket 1900