

Lodge Building Historical Tour



A self-guided tour

General Background

In 1932, The Great Depression hit Keweenaw County hard. This caused many large mining companies to close, including Ahmeek Mining Company, who single handedly laid off around 700 men. The Keweenaw suffered tremendously with the highest unemployment rate in not only the state of Michigan, but the entire country at 75.2%. The county was noticeably suffering to the point that Harry Hopkins, a close friend and advisor of President Franklin Roosevelt's, reported the dire need for relief to aid the Keweenaw County residents. In autumn of 1933, Ocha Potter helped develop plans for the previously named Keweenaw Park and Golf Course in order to provide jobs to the unemployed individuals and families. The project began as part of the Civil Works Administration program but finished under the Works Progress Administration.

To begin the project, 167.27 acres of land, valued at \$20,000 was donated to the county. The Keweenaw Park and Golf Course project began on Monday, November 6, 1933 with 124 workmen. The first aspect of the project was to create a gravel entrance road and clear timber from the land to use as building material. While the total cost of the Keweenaw Park and Golf Course came out to \$126,092, 75% of those expenses went to paying employees and the remaining 25% paid for goods, materials, and miscellaneous services. The opening day was Sunday, June 23, 1935 with more than 2,000 visitors on the property. There were events held throughout the day including a golf tournament, prizes, and refreshments.

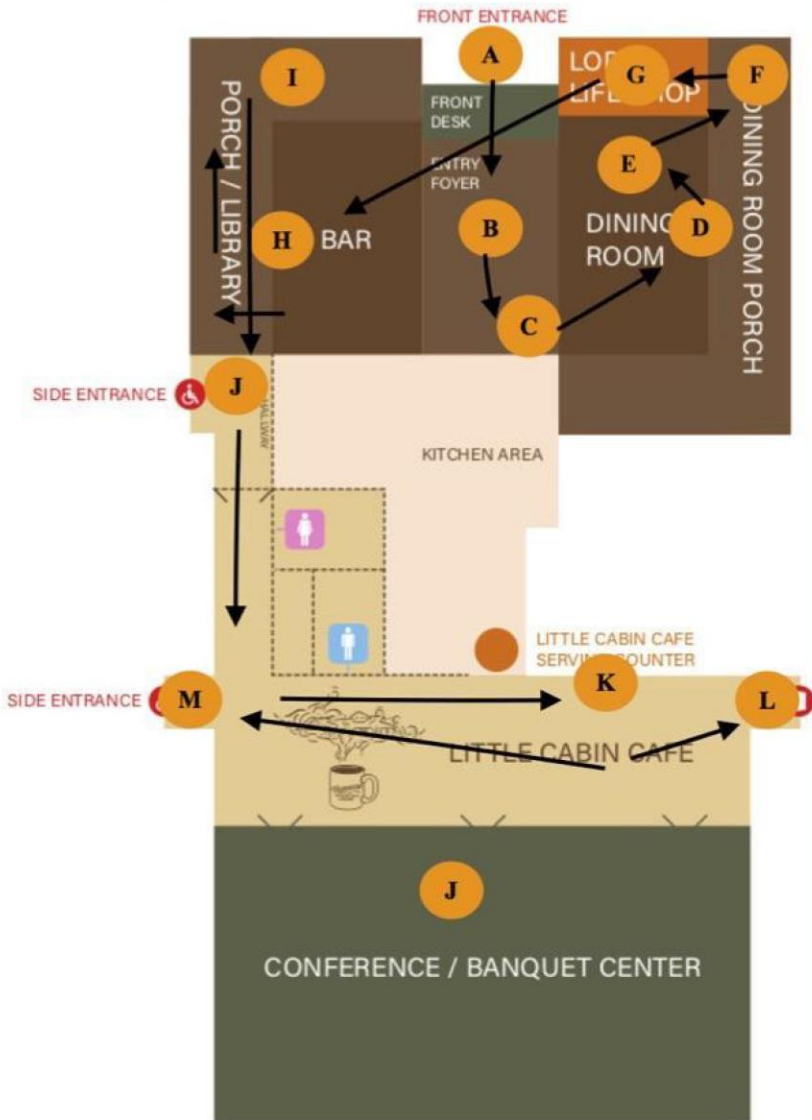
The construction of the clubhouse was delayed because of the county's disagreement and struggle to locate a professional to supervise the construction of the clubhouse. Eventually, WM. C "Clem" Veale became the construction manager and later the property manager. The design and inspiration of the clubhouse came from the Shingle, Bungalow and Western Stick architectural styles from the early 1900's. which is known as "Parkitecture." The clubhouse was originally a 96 foot x 50 foot building with a second-story loft used for a number of summers for a residence of Keweenaw Park's full time golf professional, Al Bovard. The clubhouse was known and used mainly by those with elite status in Keweenaw County. The clubhouse was the spot to "see and be seen" in Keweenaw County.

The lodge was publicly owned until 2018 when it was put up for auction. The auction for the lodge was held in the conference center in late July and purchased by Keweenaw Resort, LLC. The finalization of ownership occurred on September 5, 2018. The lodge was also privately owned by two different land contracts in the mid-1960s and 1970 both of which involved an agreement to purchase the lodge. However, both of these agreements fell through as the buyers failed to make payments to finalize the ownership change. While the change in ownership in 2018 was an adjustment for Keweenaw County, it proved to be beneficial for the success of the lodge. The Keweenaw Mountain Lodge encompasses many historical aspects of Keweenaw County and today stands as a symbol for the challenges and resilience of that time. Today, the Lodge strives to marry the history with the future in order to get to a progressive and vibrant present.



A photograph from the Keweenaw Park and Golf Course opening day ceremony, June 23, 1935.

The Clubhouse Map



A. Framework of Clubhouse:

The framework was built in 1934. Victor Oja, Edd Ackley, and Silas Remillard led the construction of the log framework of the clubhouse. Around 18,700 trees were cut down and 16,500 stumps used in the clearing of the land. While the men who worked on the project did it mostly with their hands, there was only one team of horses used to transport logs. The horses' names were "Nick" and "Dick."



*Men are unloading logs for placement in the cabin behind the cart.
Circa 1936-38.*

B. Entryway/Foyer:

The Foyer has been a staple to the lodge, at times live music can be heard playing in this room as you walk through the main doors. New carpet was added to the foyer in 2019. When looking at it, notice the different tile patterns; the darker color tiles merging into the carpet when you walk further into the lodge - inviting you into the Lodge.

Shortly after opening, this porch was used as part of the bar and drinking area. In 1964 and 1965 construction began to install a new bar area. For a long time the porch was then used as administrative offices for the lodge staff. The large windows in the bar were covered up by a mural, blocking the view. In 2020 the walls were torn down and the windows uncovered in order to share the view of Brockway Mountain with the guests.



J. Conference / Banquet Center:

At this point you are entering the addition of the original clubhouse. Construction started in November 2006 and was completed in Spring of 2007. The grand opening was on July 21, 2007. The wood that was used to outline the walls in the addition was taken from the trees cut down on the property in order to make room for this renovation. This is now a 7,000-square foot banquet facility and conference center that cost \$3.3 million to construct. \$1.273 million of the total consisted of a USDA Rural Development loan and the other \$1.754 million came from a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

The president of MJO Contracting was Mick J. Oja who was the grandson of Victor Oja. Victor Oja, 72 years earlier than the renovation, was KCRC's on-site Superintendent overseeing the construction of the clubhouse. Mick Oja was able to work on the same property or project as his grandfather.

Pictured is a rate card and Brochure from the 1940s.



RATES, ETC.

SINGLE ROOM IN COTTAGES

One Guest—\$2.50

Two Guests—\$3.00

COTTAGES with BEDROOM and LIVING ROOM, BATHROOM shared with adjoining apartment.

One Guest—\$4.00

Two Guests—\$5.00. Three or four Guests—\$6.00

DE LUXE COTTAGES—LIVING ROOM with FIREPLACE, BEDROOM and BATHROOM—COMPLETE SUITE.

One Guest—\$6.00

Two Guests—\$7.50

Three or four Guests—\$9.00

DE LUXE FAMILY COTTAGES — TWO BEDROOMS, connecting BATHROOM and large LIVING ROOM with FIREPLACE

Two Guests—\$10.00

Three or four Guests—\$12.00

Five or six Guests—\$14.00

Note: All lodging payable in advance. 10% discount on weekly and monthly LODGING ONLY.

DINING ROOM

A la carte service in main dining room

Hours: 7:30 A.M. to 10:00 A.M.—12:00 to 2:00 P.M.

6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.

COFFEE SHOP

Hours: 7:30 A.M. to 10:00 P.M. A la carte service.

GOLF—TENNIS—SHUFFLEBOARD

No charge to guests in cottages. Nominal charge to non guests. GOLFERS must register at the Pro Shop.

Long Distance Telephone—Western Union Telegraph

DEEP SEA TROLLING—ISLE ROYALE CRUISE

Reservations will be made at the office. No service charge.

For further information and reservations,
wire, phone or write:

KEWEENAW PARK, COPPER HARBOR, MICHIGAN

D. Fireplace - 1st fire place located in dining room:

(*Note: If you do not want to enter the dining room at this time, refer to letter H to visit the second fireplace.)

The fireplaces and chimneys were designed and built by Louis Azzi, an Italian mason. The fireplace screens were crafted in the Keweenaw County Road Commission shop and are still in use today.

E. Dining Room:

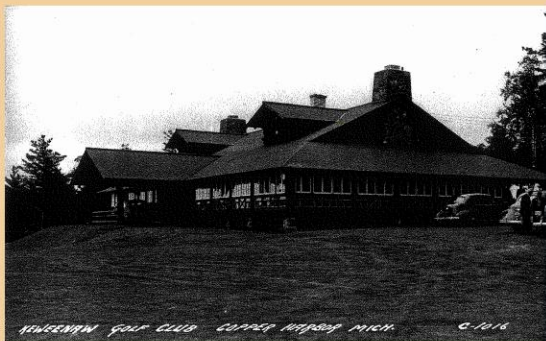
This is where one of the original rough-cut-stone- masonry fireplaces and screens are located; both of which were designed by Louis Azzi. Look up and notice the grandiose log construction.

In the 1960s the lodge had different managers with different dress codes. The dining room attire used to be “jacket and tie after 5,” but with the changing times this was removed, and the dining room attire was relaxed.

The original light fixtures were used since 1934 and then replaced in 2020 to better showcase the log architecture. They were hammered copper chandeliers and light fixtures made by Calumet and Hecla’s Metal Shop.

F. Dining Room Porch:

The Dining Room Porch is now enclosed, but for the first 5 to 6 years all of the porches were open looking towards the east. The view from the porch looks over Lake Superior, the largest freshwater lake in the world by surface area. Although, it is hard to see now because the trees have grown up over the years.



This is the outside of the clubhouse around 1939 with the newly enclosed porch

G. Lodge Life Shop:

The Lodge Life Shop was originally part of the porch and then enclosed as part of the dining area. Renovations for this space began in late 2018 and 2019 when the lodge became privately owned. New carpet and hanging shelves were added into the shop.

H. Fireplace: 2nd fireplace located in bar area

This is the second original fireplace in the lodge. The fireplaces' and chimneys were designed and built by Louis Azzi, an Italian mason. The fireplace screens were crafted in the Keweenaw County Road Commission shop and are still used today.

*The bar and lounge area and fireplace in 1935-1936.
Notice the screens in front of the Fireplace are still used today.*



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K. Basement/Lower Area:

At this point, you are overlooking the basement area. The basement of the clubhouse was originally used as a coffee shop named “The Grill” and included a shower and locker room facilities to be used by both golfers and the employees. A full bar and bartender were located in the basement where golfers were able to come in and out. “The Grill” was very popular because guests did not have to get dressed up in a suit to dine there. The basement is still used for employee work stations and dry storage. You will also find the laundry facility for washing the napkins, sheets, blankets and towels.



Enclosing the lower level of the clubhouse in 1936. A WPA sign is mounted on the tree to the left.

L Outside Door to Back Nine Hiking/Biking Trails

If you want to explore further, exit the clubhouse through this side door, where you will see a bike work station and the trailhead for the Back 9 Hiking and Biking Trails.

M. Outside Door to Putting Green and Pro Shop

If you want to explore further, exit the clubhouse through this door, where you will see the putting green and the Outdoor Activity Center (OAC).

Source: *The Keweenaw Mountain Lodge Story* by Paul LaVanway

I. Porch/Library:



This is a photograph of William C. "Clem" Veale on the right taken in the late 1950s. Howard Hunt is pictured on the left, a Michigan State Highway Commissioner

keweenawmountainlodge.com