

Coppo Block 1902



NPS, Keweenaw NHP, Curto Album 6 #083, 6th Street, ca. 1930

This building was built by Vital Coppo in 1902. After working in the mines, Coppo established a boarding house here in 1874, in a wood-frame building which previously occupied this site. In 1875, he opened a saloon on the first floor of the house, carrying wines, liquors, and cigars. After over 25 years in business, he was able to afford to build this larger, more substantial commercial building. The Coppo family lived upstairs, and rented apartments as well.

Over the years, storefronts here were occupied by a saloon and pool hall – John Schenk, the proprietor, also lived upstairs; a merchant tailor, John Rastello, who advertised that he had the finest domestic and imported woolens in stock; and a nurse, Rebecca Douglass, who also lived upstairs. Other businesses located here over the years include a plumber and pipe fitter, Battista Picchiottino, and the Houghton County Electric Light Company – as the local electric utility company was known. The Coppo Block was given a new lease on life when it was acquired and rehabilitated by current owners Jim and Stacey Flood, after a fire in the third floor in 1998.



NPS, Keweenaw NHP, Coppertown Box 32, Calumet Postcards, 6th Street, ca. 1920

In 1913, there were four storefronts in this building; two on the main floor, and two in the basement. The basement storefronts had full-sized plate-glass windows just like the main floor storefronts, which faced a second short public sidewalk constructed under the ground-level sidewalk, accessible by a staircase at the front of the building. Many of the businesses and residents who occupied this building at that time were Italian. Many Italians, though not all, supported the strike in 1913.

RED JACKET 1913 – WINDOWS INTO THE PAST