

**A. E. SEAMAN
MINERAL MUSEUM**
OF MICHIGAN TECH

Showcase

Over the summer, we here in the museum have continued to be very active. Visitors have rated us the, # 1 local destination on TripAdvisor® with average satisfaction of 4.9 out of 5! They have not been requested to rate us and they, not us, have posted the many pictures on TripAdvisor®. We know that visitors have found us through the web and this has contributed to our visitation this year being up by 5 % through August. Our full-color bi-fold brochure attracts visitors to the museum. About 5 thousand brochures are distributed to official state visitor centers across Michigan while 10 thousand are distributed locally to motels and other tourist sites. We know that people visit us because of "word-of-mouth." The museum is a destination to visit. Just today, a visitor told us that they visited the local area just to come to the museum. The museum is a Keweenaw Heritage Site, a partner of the Keweenaw National Historical Park. The park was originally proposed to improve local tourism and it attracts visitors to the area and to us. As a park partner, we preserve and interpret the key part of the local history.....the minerals.....for without the minerals there would be no park.



Our connection to the historical park extends beyond minerals. The museum exhibits a life sized oil painting of Douglass Houghton after whom the City of Houghton, Michigan Tech's Douglass Houghton Hall, Houghton Lake (the largest inland lake in Michigan) etc. are named. The painting showing Houghton in front of Pictured Rocks was done in the 1870s and a duplicate original was purchased by the Michigan House of Representatives in 1879. Douglass Houghton was Michigan's first state geologist and his report to the Michigan legislature in 1841, 175 years ago, led to the first mining rush (1843-1844) in North America to the Keweenaw Peninsula in search of riches from mining copper. Houghton was born in Troy, New York on September 21, 1809 and graduated with a B. A. degree in 1829 from Rensselaer Scientific School (today Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute). He moved to the Michigan Territory in 1830 to give public lectures on natural history in Detroit. He became the surgeon and botanist for Henry Rowe's expedition to discover the source of the Mississippi River. He practiced medicine from 1832 to 1836 in Detroit. Michigan became a state in 1837 and soon after Houghton became the first state geologist with the principal task of leading the Geological Survey of Michigan. He was a nationally-recognized modern professional geologist and was a founding member of what is today the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Houghton was mayor of Detroit from 1843 to 1844 and was being nominated for Governor at the time of his early demise. Houghton, age 36, and two of his men drowned in a Lake Superior storm near Eagle River (his dog Meeme shown in the painting survived) on October 13, 1845.

A new State of Michigan Historical Marker honoring Douglass Houghton was dedicated Saturday September 10, 2016 in a morning ceremony led by the Keweenaw County Historical Society in Eagle River, Michigan. Several descendants of Douglass Houghton were among the approximately 70 attendees. The museum contributed to the dedication by my leading of a one day pre- and one-half day post-ceremony geological and historical field trip for 30 representatives of the Lansing-based Michigan Basin Geological Society, who proposed the plaque. Larry Molloy, president of the Keweenaw County Historical Society and museum member, was co-leader. Next to the portrait in the museum mineral specimens collected by Douglass Houghton are on exhibit. The exhibit was installed last month. These specimens are part of the University of Michigan mineral collection now co-owned by the museum under the Michigan Mineral Alliance.

We have made several improvements in exhibits in the past few months. I'll tell you about several of them in the next issue of **Showcase**.

All the best, Ted Bornhorst, Executive Director

