

THE PASTY OF MICHIGAN MINERS

A Streamlined One-Course Meal
Courtesy (in-part) by the Ironwood Area
Historical Museum



Michigan's unique contribution to the American palate is the hot pasty, a streamlined one-course dinner you can carry in your pocket without spilling a mouthful. Hours after baking...

...it is still warm.

Call it a meat pie or whatever but the pasty is an important article of diet throughout the copper and iron regions of the Upper Peninsula.

Pasty ingredients may vary, but the basics include meat, potatoes and onions baked in a half-moon shaped crust sealed by crinkled edges. Its proper seasoning, of course, depends upon the knowledge of the cook and which has much to do with the success of the pasty. Each cook has their own recipe for making a pasty. More likely than not, it is a verbal "hand-me-down" throughout many generations.

Michigan first saw the pasty during the "70's" (1870) and "80's" when the sturdy Cornish miners flocked to the Upper Peninsula to sink the shafts for the then infant mining industry. The newcomers had worked underground for generations in the southwestern tip of England and were sorely needed in a country of lumberjacks and fishermen.

The Cornishmen brought with them a dialect. Because of their English origin, they were called "Cousins" and "Union Jacks" but the term soon became "Cousin Jacks." Their wives, known as "Cousin Jennies," introduced seed and saffron buns, heavy cake, scald cream, fig duff and other delicacies and served a standard Sunday breakfast of creamed codfish. But their most important kitchen contribution was the pasty, born of necessity many decades before the invention of the dinner pail. Back in Cornwall, the wives baked the pasties in the morning, rolled them in their aprons and hurried down to the mine shafts, often miles from home. In essence, we can all be grateful to the Corning for bringing their version of the pasty to the Lake Superior region.

So while you're visiting our area, stop at a local bakery or restaurant and enjoy a hot pasty. One famous stop is Joe's Pasty Shop in downtown Ironwood on Aurora Street or at their second location (drive-thru) in the Cloverland Cedar Court Plaza located on E. Highway U.S. 2, Ironwood.

PAULDING MYSTERY LIGHT

The "LIGHT" has defied explanation since it was first sighted many years ago, although theories abound.

Surrounded by dense woods and from the summit of nearby hills, the mysterious light can be observed almost every night once darkness has descended on the northern wilderness.

The "LIGHT" appears to rise slowly out of the forest and then hovers low in the sky for varying intervals - ranging from a couple of minutes to over a quarter of an hour. Often described as looking like a "bright star" it first seems to be a campfire ember, reaching an intense reddish glow, then becoming a haze and finally receding to a mere spark before disappearing into the night.

Explanations vary from fanciful to factual. Some say it's the spirit of a long dead mail carrier ambushed by Indians over a century ago; others insist it is the ghost of an engineer killed in a nearby railroad accident in years gone by.

In the meantime, "THE MYSTERY LIGHT" continues to baffle, intrigue and mystify the visitor.

Directions to the Paulding Light - Take State Highway 45 north out of Watersmeet Michigan. About 5 miles out of Watersmeet, the road will begin a slow bend to the right. Watch for a road on the left side of 45 named "Robbins Pond Road" (old state hwy 45). There is usually a brown park sign right before. Turn left on Robbins Pond Road. Follow the gravel road down about 3/8 mile until you see the dead end barricade. During the summer months, you will also see the sign put up by the National Park Service.

