

# Ancient Copper Mines of Lake Superior

John Jacob Houghton

It is proper to remark that the following paper was written by Mr. Houghton for Mr. A. P. Swineford's work on "The Mineral Region of Lake Superior," first appearing in the *Marquette Mining Journal* early in 1876. By the writer's consent, it finds a place in this connection.

Mr. Houghton, the writer, is a brother of the lamented Dr. Douglas Houghton, of Michigan, and when only seventeen, accompanied him to Lake Superior in his valuable geological and mineralogical explorations in 1844; and ever since his brother's unfortunate death in 1845, Mr. Jacob Houghton has been intimately connected with the mining interests of Lake Superior, though not always residing there; and, from time to time, opened a large number of "ancient mining pits" in the Lake Superior copper region, and became deeply interested in the study and investigation of the ancient copper mines and their products, of that section of the country. It was an interesting field for such study, and it is apparent that he availed himself of the rare opportunity with more than ordinary zeal and success. For over a year past Mr. Houghton has had the superintendency of the Moose Mining Company, at Dudley, Colorado.

Schoolcraft, in the fifth volume of his *History of the Indian Tribes*, pp. 395-396, remarks: "Recent discoveries in the basin of Lake Superior, denote that these veins [of native copper] have been pursued by miners in ancient times, in their natural courses, with more skill and energy than belongs to the Indian race. Vestiges of ancient mines have been discovered of so important a character, in this basin, that modern miners have paused in astonishment to behold them. The subject appears destined to shed more light, indeed, on the aboriginal history, than even the mounds of the West; for it denotes the application of a peculiar system of labor which was never in known periods, a characteristic of savage tribes, in which, at the best, they could only have been employed as auxiliaries." L. C. D.

Geologists now find that the antiquity of man far antedates the era assigned to his creation by the received chronology, and submit the evidences of their belief to an enlightened public sentiment. However strange these new views with regard to the origin and history of our race may appear, they cannot be disregarded. We must weigh the value of observations, and press them to their legitimate conclusions. The investigator at this day must not be framed, in the language of Humboldt, by "an assemblage of dogmas bequeathed from one age to another"—"by a physical philosophy made up of popular errors."—J. W. FOSTER.