

## Mineral Spotlight: Copper

When you think of mineral resources in Michigan, copper may be one of the first minerals to come to mind. This week's Mineral of the Week is copper to celebrate the opening of the Museum's special featured display, Michigan Minerals, this week!

Michigan copper has a long and storied history. It was deposited by hydrothermal fluids that were pushed through fractures and void spaces in rock during the Keweenaw Rift event, which began about 1.1 billion years ago. Native Americans were the first to mine the copper deposits from 5000 BCE to 1200 BCE. However, the practice had stopped by the time European settlers encountered the Keweenaw Peninsula in the late 18th century. Copper mining would take off in the Peninsula in the 1840s, just before California's Gold Rush. Over the course of about 120 years, an estimated over 10.8 billion pounds of native copper (copper in its elemental, metallic state) would be extracted from the Keweenaw Peninsula. Around 1969, most major copper mines in the Upper Peninsula began to close due to labor troubles and the falling price of copper. The last active copper mine in the Keweenaw, the White Pine Mine, closed in 1997.

Come check out our new crystalline native copper and more never-before-seen Museum pieces in our Mineral of Michigan display!

This feature was posted on Dice Museum social media by Museum curator Jillian Herlinger on 9/27/2022.

