



Photographed 2013

### **Mesaba Park**

Built by the "Red" Finns of the Iron Range as a place for working people to gather, share culture and organize against the bosses, and where the advocacy of socialism was welcome. Historically, Mesaba Co-op Park had been an important part of the struggles of the people for peace, freedom, social & economic justice and where solidarity with workers around the world was organized.

### **The Mesabi Range Co-op Federation: Founders of Mesaba Park**

The Mesabi Range Co-op Federation was made up of 17 societies, including creameries, a regional oil association and co-op stores. Between 1922 and 1929 the sales of the cooperatives on the Iron Range doubled.

Cooperative enterprises were directly tied to the labor struggles of the region and groups such as the Western Federation of Miners and the Socialist Party of America (1907 Miner's Strike), Industrial Workers of the World (1917 Miner's Strike), the Communist Party and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).

From 1920 to 1940 Minnesota was home to more Finns than any other state except Michigan. Since 1905 Finns constituted the largest of six major foreign-born immigrant groups on the Mesabi Range and they made up some 40% or more of the foreign population in twelve of the towns and villages. By 1920 the Finnish population of St. Louis County peaked at 17,342. \*\*



*(Photo: President Calvin Coolidge, Mrs. Coolidge, and John Coolidge in their car driving through Hibbing, Minnesota, during visit to the ore mines. Behind them is the Northland business car of the Duluth, Missabe and Iron Range Railroad. New York World Telegraph and Sun photo collection, 1928, Library of Congress).*

## THE PRESIDENCY: Iron Country

TIME magazine Monday, Aug. 13, 1928

President Coolidge celebrated the close of his fifth year in office with a short railroad trip. It is only about a three-hour journey from Cedar Island lodge to a place called Hibbing in the Minnesota hinterland. Thither the President journeyed in a special train provided by U. S. Steel Corp., a train that had been examined and guarded with utmost care for 48 hours before its great passenger went aboard. Steel Corporation guards were posted at switches and trestles. Some 700 American Legion men were mobilized for guard duty at stations.\*\*

### Silent Cal at the Hull Rust Mine

Tuesday, August 02, 2011 By Aaron Brown. In the story President Coolidge climbed the new viewing stand overlooking the Hull Rust Mine. Local historians have told me that many expected Coolidge to give a speech at the Hull Rust to inaugurate the new viewing stand and commemorate his historic visit. But the understated Coolidge, known to history as "Silent Cal," merely watched the shovels and trains, turned and said, "That's a pretty big hole," got back in his car and left for Virginia, Minn., where he was presented with animal pelts.\*\*\*

[http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-bt1GRRYBFsc/TjirJub9\\_8I/AAAAAAAAADc0/qBvrtiiK-us/s400/coolidge\\_hibbing.jpg](http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-bt1GRRYBFsc/TjirJub9_8I/AAAAAAAAADc0/qBvrtiiK-us/s400/coolidge_hibbing.jpg)

\*\* [http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-bt1GRRYBFsc/TjirJub9\\_8I/AAAAAAAAADc0/qBvrtiiK-us/s400/coolidge\\_hibbing.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.minnesotabrown.com/2011\\_08\\_01\\_archive.html&usq=\\_hQ0CINFeT88zmc8zkDYIsaOsFQY=&h=319&w=400&sz=26&hl=en&start=69&zoom=1&tbnid=TkLMylxJ2FjnmM:&tbnh=99&tbnw=124&ei=q2JrT6rhJ9GDsgKakfyMBg&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dmines%2B%2522iron%2Brange%2522%2Bcommunists%26start%3D63%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DN%26tbm%3Disch&itbs=1](http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-bt1GRRYBFsc/TjirJub9_8I/AAAAAAAAADc0/qBvrtiiK-us/s400/coolidge_hibbing.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.minnesotabrown.com/2011_08_01_archive.html&usq=_hQ0CINFeT88zmc8zkDYIsaOsFQY=&h=319&w=400&sz=26&hl=en&start=69&zoom=1&tbnid=TkLMylxJ2FjnmM:&tbnh=99&tbnw=124&ei=q2JrT6rhJ9GDsgKakfyMBg&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dmines%2B%2522iron%2Brange%2522%2Bcommunists%26start%3D63%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DN%26tbm%3Disch&itbs=1)

\*\*\* [http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-bt1GRRYBFsc/TjirJub9\\_8I/AAAAAAAAADc0/qBvrtiiK-us/s400/coolidge\\_hibbing.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.minnesotabrown.com/2011\\_08\\_01\\_archive.html&usq=\\_hQ0CINFeT88zmc8zkDYIsaOsFQY=&h=319&w=400&sz=26&hl=en&start=69&zoom=1&tbnid=TkLMylxJ2FjnmM:&tbnh=99&tbnw=124&ei=q2JrT6rhJ9GDsgKakfyMBg&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dmines%2B%2522iron%2Brange%2522%2Bcommunists%26start%3D63%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DN%26tbm%3Disch&itbs=1](http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-bt1GRRYBFsc/TjirJub9_8I/AAAAAAAAADc0/qBvrtiiK-us/s400/coolidge_hibbing.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.minnesotabrown.com/2011_08_01_archive.html&usq=_hQ0CINFeT88zmc8zkDYIsaOsFQY=&h=319&w=400&sz=26&hl=en&start=69&zoom=1&tbnid=TkLMylxJ2FjnmM:&tbnh=99&tbnw=124&ei=q2JrT6rhJ9GDsgKakfyMBg&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dmines%2B%2522iron%2Brange%2522%2Bcommunists%26start%3D63%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DN%26tbm%3Disch&itbs=1)

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**Farmer-Labor candidates for Minnesota governor, U.S. Senator Elmer Benson, and John T. Bernard, nominee for the U.S. House at Mesaba Park 1936**

During the 1930's, Mesaba Park hosted annual summer festivals, which were major political and cultural events for the region. These festivals combined a mix of leftist politics, recreation, music and dancing.

One of the most significant festivals at Mesaba Park was in 1936. That festival, which attracted 8-10,000 people, is believed to be one of the largest gatherings ever held on the Iron Range. Speaking to the huge crowd were Farmer-Labor candidates for Minnesota governor, U.S. Senator Elmer Benson, and John T. Bernard, nominee for the U.S. House. Benson and Bernard were swept into office that fall as the upstart Farmer-Labor Party reached unprecedented heights of electoral power.\*\*

<http://thelunchpail.blogspot.com/2008/08/framing-issues-framing-ideas-framing.html>

\*\* <http://www.mesabapark.us/75years.html>

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Camp Class Struggle is an annual late spring/early summer gathering sponsored by Youth for Socialist Action and the Lake Superior branch of Socialist Action. It's a place where activists, both young and old, can come together to share ideas and experiences, hear some great political presentations & skits, do some camping and play some sports! ...Camp Class Struggle was held on May 22 & 23 2004 at the Mesaba Coop Park. The Mesaba Coop Park is an historic working class retreat located on Minnesota's Iron Range that was founded and continues to be maintained by socialists and peace & justice activists.\*\*

[http://www.socialistaction.org/camp\\_files/image021.jpg](http://www.socialistaction.org/camp_files/image021.jpg)

\*\* <http://www.socialistaction.org/camp.htm>

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### 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Mesaba Park

On June 26-27, 2004 Mesaba Co-op Park celebrated its 75th anniversary, reflecting a remarkable history of political, cultural and social events.

Founded in 1929 on Minnesota's Iron Range, Mesaba Park is probably the best remaining example of the community halls and culture of the Finnish socialist and cooperative movements of the 1920's and 30's.\*\*

<http://www.mesabapark.us/logo2.gif>

\*\*<http://www.mesabapark.us/75years.html>

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Today, Mesaba Co-op Park has drifted away from the intended purpose of the "Red" Finns and the class struggle is seldom discussed as old hippies dance around the "May Pole."\*\*

[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/\\_2w4nixukPZc/SGA7C3jVSeI/AAAAAAAAAC0/zQJZHw3sHWI/S760/1534012maypole.jpg](http://3.bp.blogspot.com/_2w4nixukPZc/SGA7C3jVSeI/AAAAAAAAAC0/zQJZHw3sHWI/S760/1534012maypole.jpg)

\*\*<http://thelunchpail.blogspot.com/2008/07/alan-maki-obama-needs-to-offer.html>

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