This nickel was shipped by rail and by sea
To Russia, Great Britain and Germany.

One million dollars was what the States spent,
To the making of nickel steel's where it went.

Mining at that time was hard and slow,
The toil back-breaking, the wages low.
As capital was really lacking,
What they needed was lots more backing.
There were only twenty-five men
On the payroll just then.
They worked in the pits and the roast-yar.
Those first few years were very hard.
The toxic fumes from the roast beds blew, killing the trees, leaving only a few.

Where once were great forests, bushy and green, now only outcroppings of rocks can be seen.

But wait! There's life behind the smoke, a diligent, hard-working folk:

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The first log building in Copper Cliff was built in 1883 by Mr. and Mrs. Tom Johnson from Bay City, Michigan. They and their daughter, Margaret, ran a boarding house for miners.
A shanty town sprang up in the vicinity of the original home site. The boarding house was torn down to make room for a Chinese laundry.

The fireplace cairn commemorating the site of the original home was designed by Roy C. Barnes and built by Dan Kelly.

In 1888, the pop. was about 500, and growing rapidly. Two new boarding houses and a grocery store were built.

During 1891, several log cabins were built on Clarabelle Road. As there was no indoor plumbing, residents got their water from Lady McDonald Lake. (Residents in other parts of town got water from creeks or the sand pit spring.)
Fires were common in those days. The buildings were all constructed of wood and everyone used wood stoves, lanterns and candles. Dangerous gas lanterns were replaced by electric lights on the streets in 1894.

In 1894, the smelter burned and a man was killed in the first mining accident. Because this was a mining town, there were laws prohibiting liquor. However, this didn't prevent it from being smuggled in....

But, to combat the forces of evil alcohol, the growing Finnish community established a temperance society in 1895.

1895 saw the first bicycle come to Copper Cliff. The Canadian Copper Co. donated $100 for the purpose of starting a library in 1896. A. V. Forsyth was the librarian.
As the community grew, churches were built. A Methodist church was built on Clarabelle Hill, a Presbyterian church on Park, a Lutheran church on Balsam, an Anglican church, and a Catholic church (1897).

The town also had a number of places of entertainment. The Rex Theatre was on Market Street. Entertainment was provided at the dances held at McKinnon's boarding house by Joe Martel and Sam Doyle - 2 expert fiddlers. A stage was built in the house and the first play was presented in December, 1888. Plays were also staged in the Methodist church with George Leek directing.

The Gorringe Club had facilities for dances, lectures, cards, reading, ping-pong and billiards. It also had a barbershop and an indoor bathroom!
The Club held a Masquerade Ball in 1902 organized by T.K. Dickerson, the manager.

In March, 1902 the Copper Cliff Courier produced its first weekly issue. J.J. Pratt was editor.

The Copper Cliff Brass Band began practising in 1894 and in 1898, it was reorganized with J.E. Vincent as bandmaster.

The Copper Cliff Lacrosse team was organized in 1890 to compete with the already existing Sudbury team. (In 1900, Bill Dorsett formed a league).

Baseball was also popular - a club was formed in 1891.