

**LAKE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
AND
LIGHTHOUSE BED AND BREAKFAST**

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Depot Open 11 AM to 4 PM Every Saturday



The mission of Lake County Historical Society is to preserve the history of Lake County, Minnesota through the study and Interpretation of artifacts, documents, and photographs that tell the story of our past and present culture.

Lake County Historical Society
PO Box 128
Two Harbors, MN 55616

Lake County Historical Society

The Iron Port

Spring 2021



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Historic Year– Covid 19 & LCHS

The Lake County Historical Society finished one of its most trying years in its 95 year history. In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic forced the Society to close its sites twice and furlough all staff. As the Society primarily relies on earned income through memberships, donations, admissions, store sales, and Bed & Breakfast reservations the pandemic certainly challenged our resolve.

Through memberships, donations, Paycheck Protection Plan loans, and CARES funding from



Behind the Scenes at the Hannah Rey Concert, October 14th 2020

the Lake County Board of Commissioners we are looking forward to the new year. As we continue to see a path out of the pandemic, the Depot Museum remains open for winter hours every Saturday 11 AM to 4 PM.

We are pivoting from

in-person programming to online programming in 2021. In 2020 we utilized our Facebook Page to host two concerts in the Depot gallery. Jon Cron and Hannah Rey both donated their time to play some terrific music and fundraise over \$2,000 for the Society.

In 2021, we are looking to expand on this Depot After Dark series and share the stories of Lake County Minnesota. We are planning our next digital programs so stay tuned to our Facebook Page!

Beacon Updates



Getting the beacon back up and running during the pandemic has proven difficult. We continue to work with the United States Coast Guard to relight the beacon. As it is a private aid to navigation, we have a few hurdles to overcome including finding parts to fix the loaner beacon.

Stay tuned for the official launch of “Keep the Beacon

Lit” campaign later this year. This will raise \$50,000 for an Sabik VRB-25 LED beacon that will mimic the iconic sweep of our original light. With high energy efficiency, this compact single unit will cut down on maintenance and conserve energy in the long term.

The CCC in Lake County



00.3777 Shorty Curtis in bunkhouse 3, Spruce Lake Camp F-53, Company 3707 c. 1935

By 1932, the unemployment rate on the Iron Range was 70% due to a significant drop in demand for iron during the Great Depression. Significantly higher than the statewide unemployment rate of 29%, nearly 1 in 4 young men aged 18 to 25 were unemployed. The Civilian Conservation Corps was established by the United States Congress March 21st, 1933 and by April 6th the first enrollees were accepted. Eligible applicants had to be between the ages of 18 and 25, unemployed, and applied for a relief program. Once mustered in, recruits would earn \$30 each month \$25 of which would be sent directly to families or dependents.

The war department handled camp administration, the department of labor in collaboration with state unemployment agencies oversaw enrollment in the program, and the departments of agriculture and interior identified project areas. In the beginning of the program, projects primarily focused on locations where natural resources were strained.

Two Harbors was selected as the natural headquarters for the East Superior Sub district of the Civilian Conservation Corps in Minnesota. Intensive timber logging at the turn of the century caused heavy soil erosion and made an unsightly, barren landscape for tourists.

Lieutenant Colonel Denham B. Crafton led the initial efforts to establish camps focused on conservation efforts in the Superior National Forest. Headquartered at the Duluth and Minnesota Northern Railroad he coordinated the movement of recruits and supplies by rail and road.

Recruits would arrive at the Two Harbors Depot, be loaded onto trucks, and transported out to camps dispersed across the region. Camps were initially composed of canvas army tents until local carpenters and recruits built permanent structures. Camps



00.811 CCC camp snowed in c. 1935

established following standards set forth by the army, these locations had to be within 25 miles of the worksite, accessible by road, with water and (when possible) on high ground.

The challenge in the East Superior Sub District was keeping the camps accessible during the winter months. Plows were used to keep the camps accessible by roadway for supply drops. Not only were supplies purchased locally but also experienced woodsmen were hired at an hourly wage to educate and advise the recruits. This helped the economy regionally rebound.

The initial 6 camps included Wanless (Crooked Lake), Cascade (Devil's Track Lake), Gunflint 1

(Hungry Jack Lake), Northern Light (16 MI South Grand Marais), Sawbill, and Caribou. These initial camps focused on forest conservation in the Superior National Forest, but by 1934 additional camps expanded to include construction projects at Minnesota State Parks and wayside rests.

With the improvement of the economy coupled with increased enlistment in the armed forces with the impending Second World War, the East Superior Sub District closed November 26th, 1941. Two of the last federal forest camps to close were in the Sub district. Gegoka (near Isabella) and Gunflint No. 1 both closed May 1942 and signaled an end of an era. The work of the CCC is reflected in nearly all state parks across our region and helped the North Shore become the tourist destination it is today.

Learn more about Minnesota and the CCC including camp details and summary of the program with Barbara Sommer's book *Hard Work and a Good Deal: The Conservation Corps in Minnesota*.



From Top: 00.2000.07 Construction of dock 00.2000.06 canoe dock completed, near Ely. Halfway Camp F-1, Company 704. c. 1935

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