



# Two Harbors Iron Port



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE  
LAKE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## BOARDING HOUSES 1900

2015  
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I would like to expand on an article that appeared in the Lake County News Chronicle earlier this month. In 1899 Two Harbors was recognized as having a population of 3,300 residents. With large numbers of transients travelling to the mines and lumber camps, boarding houses figured significantly in the development and economy of the community. In the discussion of boarding houses and hotels its important to remember that conditions were far from what a guest may expect today.

In the spring of 1883 Agate Bay was a collection of shanties and tents. One of the first significant dwellings built by the railroad was the Iron Range House. It was built specifically to house railroad employees. It was located on the far western end of the vacant lot below the Mallet Display. It was managed by Butler and Blake but was affectionately known to boarders as "Ma Blakes". The house was built without interior stairwells to make room for more beds. In the early days boarders had to climb an exterior ladder to reach the second story. The Iron Range House had 66 boarders in 1899.



The Agate Bay House, again built by the railroad, would be built in June of 1883 and later expanded to become the Lakeview Hotel. It would be moved to its current location on 4<sup>th</sup> avenue and 8<sup>th</sup> street in the early 1890's to take advantage of the increasing number of people arriving at the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Depot on the newly completed Lake Division. In 1899 the Lakeview hotel had 47 residents.

The North Shore House was built by John Kinsella in 1884 on Whiskey Row. When Thomas Sexton finally sold his last four acres in 1886 the hotel was relocated to the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Poplar (6<sup>th</sup>) Street. It is claimed that this was the first lot sold in the new village of Two Harbors by the Minnesota Iron Company. Kinsella bought a lot that had corner frontage of 140' x 150'. He would expand his lot to include the Lee Kee laundry, the Rex Theater, Johnston's Undertaking, Pelto Bottling Works, Tait Photo Studio, and Bennatt Barber Shop. He would call this little empire the Kinsella Block.

The following is an incomplete list of hotels and boarding houses and the number of residents listed in Polks Rage Cities Directory 1900.

Charles Moberg Boarding house	13
Commercial Hotel	46
Ideal Hotel	17
Iron Range House	66
Lakeview Hotel	47
Linda Peterson House	5
North Shore House	48
Superior House	3
The Clifton	53
Tremont House	17



In order to make ends meet if there was room for an extra bed in someone's house, it was rented. This helped many families maintain households. Rent was from two bits a day to \$5.00 a week, depending upon the sleeping accommodations and meals included.

People Boarding in Residences

- Homes on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue: 15 homes boarding 35 people
- Homes on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue: 26 homes boarding 49 people
- Homes on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue: 23homes boarding 54people
- Homes on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue: 27 homes boarding 62 people
- Homes on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue: 27 homes boarding 63 people
- Homes on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue: 10 homes boarding 20 People
- Homes on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue: 7 homes boarding 9 people
- Homes on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue: 4 homes Boarding 5 people

- Maple (5<sup>th</sup>) Street 4 Homes boarding 6 people
- Poplar (6<sup>th</sup>) Street: 7 homes boarding 11 people
- Cedar (7<sup>th</sup>) Street: 7 homes boarding 11 people
- Pine (8<sup>th</sup>) Street: 5 homes boarding 6 people
- Birch (9<sup>th</sup>) Street: 2 homes boarding 2 people

Edna G	1 person
Lighthouse Point	8 People
Coal Dock	4 People
	Total 661 (20% of 3300)

The previous information does not include stats for the YMCA. When it was turned over to the D&IRR Railroad Employees Association it was expanded. The D&IR Club House could house 48 people. There is a story about an old railroad that lived out his life at the D&IR Clubhouse and after his passing they discovered a chest under his bed containing more than \$200,000.00. He obviously had more faith in the fire department than in the banks.

Boarding houses were not welcomed by everyone. Thomas Owens was an investor in the Commercial and later the Agate Bay Hotel. He was upset regarding the proliferation of "unlicensed" boarding houses in the city and sent several letters to the City Council demanding they take action to shut some down. The unlicensed boarders he was referring to were private residences letting out rooms.



The Windsor Hotel



Moises Boarding House



Svee or Swedish Hotel, later The Clifton  
Where the Moose is today.



Gundersons or the Eagle Hotel



Two Harbor House  
8th St and 2nd Ave.



Central Hotel 623 3rd Ave

I would like to take the time to say

## Thank You

to our retiring Board Members

After serving for many years **James Anderson** has retired from our Board of Directors. Jim's expertise and common sense approach will be missed at our Board Meetings. Jim your motion to adjourn has been seconded and unanimously approved.

**Dale R. Congdon** has also retired from the Board at the end of 2014. In addition to writing *The Light on Agate Bay* for the Historical Society Dale and his wife Joan have been active throughout the entire community. In particular they have seen to maintenance of many of the communities gardens.

We know we will see you around and please don't be shy about stopping in.

Please help in giving a warm a welcome to our newest Board Member.

We are happy to have **Jennifer Niemi** start her first term on the Board in 2015. Jennifer is a Two Harbors resident who had the privilege of living at the Two Harbors Light Station as a child. She is currently employed with the MN Historical Society at Split Rock Lighthouse Historic Site as the Program Manager. You can also find Jennifer busy with her families many scouting activities.

## Projects List for Winter Spring 2015

### Duluth & Iron Range Depot

- Depot Basement Drain Tile

Our goal this year is to engage an engineering firm to create the Scope of Work Plan. Once we have this we can move forward with seeking funding to complete the project.

### Two Harbors Light Station Museum

- Light Station Patio

This will include the repair of the Water Babies Fountain and a fire pit. I believe this will enhance our guests experience at the B&B.

- Assistant Keepers Quarters

Ramp needs repair

Porch needs paint

Roof needs to be redone

- Oil House

Needs a new shingles

### Education and Outreach / Special Projects / Memberships

Upgrade historical markers / make them permanent.

Publish a list of available presentations and use them to build memberships

## Thank you

To everyone that has already renewed your membership for 2015

## Facebook Fun

For those of you that have not "liked us" on Facebook this image is one of the many great photos that we share from our archives through social media. My goal this year is 1000 likes!

The White Eagle Gas and Oil Station. Perry Carroll is standing next to the eagle.

Can you imagine trying to cross 7th / 61 with just a stop sign in the summer?



## Thoughts and Information about the **Fresnel Lens**

### UPDATE:

On January 12 2015 the Board of Directors authorized the hiring of Chad Kaiser of RELUME Inc. to transport the 4th order Fresnel Lens from Vermilion Ohio to Two Harbors Minnesota. Mr. Kaiser is one of a select group approved by the United States Coast Guard Curatorial Service to transport lenses around the country. His tentative date of arriving in Two Harbors will be late evening February 19th. We will install the lens into the case the following Friday. This all being dependant on The National Museum of the Great Lakes Curator being able to meet him in Vermilion Ohio earlier that week. We will schedule an exhibit opening for later in the summer of 2015.

### Basic Information:

The 4th order lens is roughly 24" in diameter and 28.5 " tall. The weight of this brass and glass composite is somewhere between 440 lbs to 600 lbs. Ryan has built a case on wheels to support that weight. It is a simple yet professional pedestal case with lighting and an acrylic enclosure to protect the lens from the omnipresent dock dust. The lens will be on loan from the USCG under a ten year renewable loan agreement.

Augustine-Jean Fresnel (pronounced "Freh' Nel") was a famous French physicist born in 1788. By 1814, he had begun research on wave optics, studying how light waves reflect and refract. In 1821, as Commissioner of Lighthouses in France, he invented a new type of lens that efficiently reflected lamplight to one focal point, allowing it to be seen for miles out to sea. The lens could also be set to rotate to create a number of different flashing intervals, called "lighthouse signatures." The Fresnel lens was revolutionary for lighthouse lenses. Before this, only simple plano-convex lenses were used, which were very inefficient and focusing only 1/6th of the total lamplight.

The Two Harbors lens went through many adaptations from fixed light to a flashing rotating beacon. By 1923 the beacon most people were familiar with had been created as the lens was adapted to configure two bull's-eyes set on a rotating clockworks, lit by electricity. This created the signature still in use today with the aerobeacon; flash/4.9 sec. darkness, flash/14.9 sec. darkness. This twenty second cycle is repeated three times a minute.



Why did it leave? When the USCG replaced the lens with the aerobeacon in 1969 it was most likely a routine upgrade. At that time lenses had yet to achieve the historical status they enjoy today and was most likely removed with little or no fanfare. I am sure the historical society wasn't even aware of the action as the USCG had no reason to alert them. It was transported to Michigan by the USCG and eventually was loaned to the Great lakes Shipwreck Museum in Vermilion Ohio where it has been on display for many years.



Many people have asked me why having this lens returned to Two Harbors is so important. The simple answer is; this is where it belongs. It is the preference of the USCG Curatorial service to see lenses stay at or in proximity to their original installations. But you have to go beyond that simple answer. While speaking at a recent meeting of the North Shore Rotary I asked how they felt about turning the beacon off when the shipping season closed. It was unanimously rejected under the recognition that the beacon is too important to the identity of the community. The Fresnel lens is part of that identity and helps to tell the story of this community.

Please see page six!

# Thank You to Our Supporters

JAN 2015

## Acquisitions

The following people have donated to the permanent collection. We would like to thank them for their generosity.

Mary & Conrad Bloomquist      Morrie Moen

### PATRON (\$250 TO \$999)

Hostetter, Jerry & Sandie  
Johnson, Lee  
Sandvik, Kenneth  
NorthShore Mining

### Benefactor (\$1,000 or More)

Lake County  
Family of D.James Jumer  
3M Corporation

### SPONSORS (\$100 TO \$249)

American Legion Post 109	Co-Op Light & Power	Costley Law Firm	MN Power
Lake Superior Magazine	Maki & Overum LTD	Two Harbors Federal Credit Union	
Hanson, John & Luann	Larson, Bobbi & Dan	Murray, Joan & Robert	Hoseth, Don
Holbeck Judy & Phil	Johnson, David & Joyce	Congdon, Dale & Joan	
Pearson, Dory & John	Svee, Cindy & Ron	Gruver, Calvin & Medler, Meredith	
Bailey, Marji & Mike	Hansen, Jim	Anderson, Robert	

### FRIEND (\$55)

Clark, Gloria & Willard	Clark, Brenda & Ricky	Northey, Lyle	Spurbeck, Carol
Ellstad, Randy	Erickson, Karen & Timothy	Ek, Harold & Jean	Williams, Amy
Falk, David & Kathleen	Iverson, Dr. Dan & Marie	Events & Marketing Specialist	
NinaWorks!	Harbor Insurance	Larson, Margaret	The Pub
The Lake Bank	TH Auto Value	Superior Shores Resorts	
Sande, Peter	Bennett, Donald & Mary Anne	Voyageur Motel	
WestStar Accounting	MN Historical Society	Norlen, Karin	

### FAMILIES (\$30) SINCE LAST QUARTER

Aleff, Gary & Nancy	Battaglia, David & Jeanne	Bjorum, Patricia & Richard
Daehn, Dawn & Jeff	Egger, Gerald & Louise	Erickson, Irene & Paul
Erickson, Beverly & Kenneth		Fritz, Chelle & Tom
Ganser, Barb & Gary	Hanson, Roy	Hartley, Phil
Hastings, Ann & Gary	Helgeson, Richard	Jacob, Marybeth & Scott
Jeronimus, Mary & Pete	Lund, Elizabeth & Sander	Mancini, N & Hoops, M
McGilligan, M & Koehler, T	Moenn, Elaine Melby- & Morrie	Munson, Shirley
Rosetter, David & Joann	Sager, Judith & Tom	Sigel, Richard & Susan-
Widen, Jim & Julia	Zastera, Ann	Zinter, Gary
H & R Block		

### Membership Categories

Individual	\$20	_____
Family	\$30	_____
Business/ Friend	\$55	_____
Sponsor	\$100	_____
Patron	\$250	_____
Lifetime	\$600	_____
Benefactor	\$1000	_____

Your Membership Benefits include:  
Free Passes to the Museums  
10% off gift shop merchandise  
10% off stays at the B&B  
Invites to Open Houses  
Newsletter

### IN MEMORIAM

\$100 - My Parents – Ken Sandvik  
\$100 – Dorothy Johnson – Emmeret Johnson  
\$10 – V. J. Kolberg - Elsie Kolberg  
\$30 – Joe Zastera – Jody Zastera

### Individual/Senior/Student (\$20) Since Last Quarter

Bjorum, Bob	Church, Joanne	Couture, Candice	Cruikshank, Kirsten	Eide, Marie	Grudnosky, Audrey
Himes, Ruth	Hopper, Nancy	Hoseth, Mabel	Johnson, Aileen	Johnson, Emmert	Johnson, Lenore
Kolberg, Elsie	Koss, Florence	Lillegaard, Margaret	Martell, Judith	Thureen, Louise	Truscott, Beverly
Woehrlin, Molly	Zastera, Jody				

THE LAKE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS A 501c.3 NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
DEPENDANT UPON THE GENEROSITY OF IT'S MEMBERS AND PATRONS.  
THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

## EXPERIENCE HISTORY

LAKE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
PO Box 128  
TWO HARBORS, MN 55616

Place  
Stamp  
here



With all this fuss over the 4th Order Fresnel Lens I should touch base on the  
**Carlisle and Finch  
DCB-224 Aerobeacon.**

Our Lightkeepers have informed me that the beacon, an antique in its own right, is in need of some maintenance. Specifically the motor needs new brushes and contact rings. This brought about the discussion concerning the age of the beacon and the possibility of parts becoming unavailable at some time in the future. We discussed buying used beacons to keep around just for the parts.



I would like to ask if anyone would like to contribute to a Keeper of the Light Fund. I would create a wood and brass plaque to be displayed at the top of the tower recognizing people who specifically want to see the light keep burning. FYI: It cost \$188 per month in electricity to operate the beacon. Each of the lamps (lamps burn, bulbs are planted in the ground) cost \$120.00 to \$160.00, we purchase 6 each year.

Our thanks to Todd, Brad, Jake, and Tom for their dedication and vigilance in looking after this equipment.