

**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

Fall 2020



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## Another Season in the Books

The Society closed the Lighthouse and 3M museums for the season on October 18th. Like most businesses, the Covid-19 pandemic altered the way we operated.

The sites opened for the season a little later than usual on June 25th and 26th, opening after the governor's stay at home order was lifted. Instead of being open 7 days a week, the sites were open Thursday through Sunday 10 to 4 with 3M being a suggested donation. We welcomed 2,678 visitors through our 3 sites this season, significantly less than

last year. The Depot museum and gift shop will remain open Saturdays, 11 AM to 4 PM.

As the Society relies on earned income from admission, membership, store sales, and donations, we were impacted greatly by the Covid-19 pandemic. LCHS has undertaken a few

fundraising campaigns and gone digital with some of our programming.

From the virtual concert with Hannah Rey to upcoming Give to the Max Day, we are striving to help cover the losses that the Covid-19 Pandemic has brought to our institution.

We thank our members for their donations and support through this difficult time. Every dollar matters and goes towards our 95 year legacy of collecting, preserving, and sharing the stories of Lake County.



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

## New Initiatives



LCHS will be participating in Give to the Max Day! On November

19th, this statewide initiative bolsters donations by offering matching grants from various sponsors.

Each donation made to the Society's page will enter LCHS into a drawing for additional donations matched by anonymous

sponsors for Give to the Max Day!

Our goal is to raise \$2,200 as the LCHS board has collectively pledged to donate \$2,200 if this goal is met. To donate visit <https://www.givemn.org/story/Lchs-Gtmd20>

Help LCHS as you shop on Amazon! The Society is a registered charity with Amazon Smile, a subset of Ama-

zon.com where 0.5% of your shopping cart will be donated to a charity of your choosing. It's simple! Go to Amazon Smile account and shop like you normally do on Amazon. On the back end, Amazon will donate 0.5% of the total dollar amount to the charity of your choosing.



# Railroads and Development of Lake County



00.6112 Alger Smith at Knife River, loading lumber c. 1915 Image by William F. Roleff

People were initially drawn to settle in Lake County due to the abundance of Natural Resources. Though the first permanent settlers initially set out to discover copper veins, the abundance of large pine trees became an integral resource in the early development of the County.

In the 1860s, the Wieland family built a lumber mill at the mouth of the Beaver River and began producing lumber for the town. His sawmill was so productive, by 1865 the Wielands used the schooner Charley to ship lumber to other ports around Lake Superior. Prior to the construction of the lines, logs were floated down rivers and streams or transported by sleigh over winter roads to settlements on the shore of Lake Superior. The sheer nature of the landscape and long winters made it nearly impossible to commercially log stands of trees inland. Starting in 1884 with the Duluth and Iron Range Railroad, the landscape of Northeast Minnesota began to change.

Railroads were built to transport resources from inland sites to ports along Lake Superior. The first survey completed in 1882 by the Minnesota

Mining Company determined the most effective route from the Lake Vermillion area to Lake Superior. Built to primarily transport Iron Ore from the Lake Vermillion area out to Two Harbors, stations along the route also brought goods and services to inland Lake County which prompted permanent settlement of these areas. These initial railroads also connected railroad spurs leading deeper into the forests of Northeast Minnesota.

In 1899, the Alger-Smith Logging Company began construction on the Duluth and Northern Minnesota Railroad to reach untouched stands of white pines. Camps and settlements rose up around the railroad lines



00.1703 Alger-Smith Section 38-60 Camp c. 1916 Image by William F. Roleff

which brought goods, people, and services to the interior of the County. Heavily dependent on the railroad, towns expanded and contracted based on accessibility by rail. Most camps were occupied for a year or two and abandoned as good timber ran out along the spur. Stations like Britton, Drummond, Freedom, and London appeared on the map. Farmsteads and small towns growing up along the depot to primarily provide service to the railroad.



00.1443 Construction of Merritt, Minnesota

The Alger-Smith Logging Company constructed nearly 100 miles of track between Knife River and Cascade and nearly 350 miles of spur or temporary tracks. Logging between 40 and 50 million feet of board each year, the company transported the majority of the logs back to Knife River to be loaded onto ships or transferred to permanent lines for journey down to sawmills in West Duluth.

In 1919, the company ceased operations in Minnesota, but was ordered to continue emergency and passenger service until 1921. By 1923, the General Logging Company of Cloquet salvaged a large amount of track to build a new mainline for their operations. Remaining track was ripped up in 1938 and sold as scrap for the war effort. In the 1920s and 1930s, roadways began to take shape in Lake County. Although largely unpaved until the 1960s, the original grades for logging routes became closely linked to roadway development in the County.

# DEC 9TH

**Save the Date! December 9th at 6:00 PM The Lake County Historical Society's Annual Membership Meeting is going virtual! While we normally host the annual membership dinner in October, the pandemic has made it impossible for us to safely gather in person. The new date for the membership dinner is December 11th. Materials including the link will be sent later in October.**

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