



THE IRON PORT

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR
THE LAKE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FALL 2021

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Society News

October 24th the 3M Birthplace Museum and Lighthouse Museums will close for the season. The Depot museum and store will remain open Saturdays from 11 AM to 4 PM throughout the winter and spring. A huge thank you to our museum staff who have welcomed over 5,500 guests into the gallery space and an estimated 16,000 visitors in the stores. Without their tireless work and dedication we would have not been able to reopen.

Like many other businesses in the area, we were open on a reduced schedule of Thursday through Monday 10 AM to 4 PM. Staffing shortages coupled with the pandemic have played a huge impact on our work. September 18th, in honor of Railroad Days, the Society hosted a "build your own candy train" craft on the Depot platform. Over 50 people participated in the make and take craft during the open hours. We also held an open house, waiving the admission fee for the day to encourage people to experience railroad history in Lake County.

The annual membership meeting will take place virtually November 3rd at 6:00 PM and feature the history of the wreck Samuel P. Ely in Agate Bay by Stephen B. Daniel: Author, Historian, and Diver. See insert in this newsletter for details on how to join the meeting and more on the speaker!

The Lake County Historical Society launched its inaugural 50/50 raffle on September 18th. The \$10 tickets can be purchased in the Depot & Lighthouse stores, from LCHS board members, and in the administrative offices. Proceeds go towards supporting the mission of the Society to "Collect, preserve, and share the stories of Lake County, Minnesota." Ticket sales end November 6th with drawing at 11:00 AM on Saturday, November 13th. Grand prize is up to \$4,000 cash (800 tickets sold) with additional prizes including a stay at the Lighthouse Bed & Breakfast Keeper's Quarters and two packages of Granite Gear Merchandise.

To learn more about Lake County History and happenings, be sure to like our Facebook Page!

LAKE COUNTY SCHOOLS: PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

Education has always played a central role in the development of Lake County. The first registered school district was established in 1859 with Gustav Wieland from Beaver Bay serving as first Chairman and Jenny Clark as first teacher. Little records remain of the early days of district 1 as education was an informal affair. Held in the post office or in settlers' homes, the first official school building in the County was built in 1884 at Two Harbors, just west of the Duluth and Iron Range Car Shop.

By 1900, Lake County was divided into 4 school districts with 671 pupils. The majority of the students attended the District 2 schools which included Two Harbors, Silver Creek, and Drummond. 71 pupils attended the other rural school districts. While Two Harbors had a sizeable tax base to support modernization and improvements of school buildings, rural populations had to collaborate with their school districts to furnish buildings and supplies for students.

In 1903, residents at Castle Danger built a log structure and requested their district to furnish a door, windows, and teacher. This rustic building was in operation for 13 years when a modern building was built in 1916 to better serve the student population.

By 1910, over 1,527 pupils were being taught across 5 districts in Lake County. 17 rural schools served 265 students with 19 teachers while the 4 city schools had an attendance of 1,262 with 41 teachers. The constant struggle for all districts was the sparse population of districts outside of Two Harbors and minimal tax base. With redistricting, some schools took a large effort to reach.

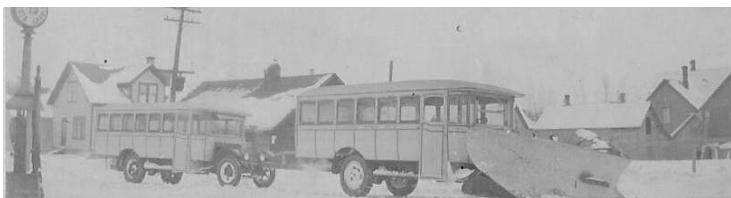


Clockwise from top: 00.1364 Rural School c. 1910; 00.1326 Rural Log Cabin School c. 1905; 00.1335 new Castle Danger Schoolhouse c. 1916

The 1912 redistricting placed Isabella School within District 2. Located on an old logging road, superintendents could only reach the school by driving to Finland and walking 18 miles down the old road to the schoolhouse.

Highlighting the difficulties rural schools faced in getting educational supplies and support to students let alone an education beyond 8th grade. This prompted a campaign to get railroads to pay gross earnings taxes to help support schools in Northeastern Minnesota. A meeting took place in Duluth to raise the issue that the majority of students arrived in the region pulled by railroading jobs. Even though the railroad brought the majority of the population to Northeastern Minnesota, the companies were not contributing money to help fund the education of young people in the region.

John Dwan and W.B. Woodward framed a bill to apply a tax to gross earnings of all companies within the region to go towards school funding. Lobbying for the bill during 1912 and 1914 legislative sessions, it was a tough bill to pass as railroads had a large pull in politics. Citizens of the region had mixed feelings about asking for earned income taxes as they were concerned that taxing would lead to job losses in the region. While the effort was tabled, Woodward returned to the legislature with District 2 Superintendent Charles E. Campton to lobby for the bill which passed in 1921. The first year the bill was enacted, district 2 received a quarter of a million dollars from the Duluth and Iron Range Railroad which enabled the district to build several schools, purchase 5 busses to transport more students to city schools, and make the district debut free.



Clockwise from Top: 11.03.02D Busses in Two Harbors c. 1920; Busses outside of Minnehaha c. 1920; 00.1351 New Minnehaha Building c. 1910

SUPERINTENDENT CHARLES E. CAMPTON



Left: Charles E. Compton Superintendent 1915-1946
 Right: Original Two Harbors High School with modern addition c. 1956

Charles E. Campton became superintendent of District 2 schools September 1st, 1915. Hired for his progressive work in Sleepy Eye, he championed equal educational opportunities for rural and city students. By 1921, tax bases for districts outside of Two Harbors were shrinking rapidly which caused unequal funding between rural and city schools. In 1924, the Minnesota State Board of Education sent Anna Swenson to a feasibility study on how all four districts could be combined into a single countywide district. In 1929, the consolidated Lake County School District was formed under superintendent Charles E. Campton.

Pooling resources, a full time nurse was hired to help ensure the health and safety of students in both rural and city schools. A librarian was employed at the Two Harbors High School to manage the 10,000 volume collection and numerous traveling libraries sent to rural district schools. A consolidated bussing system enabled more students to reach the city schools and subsequently receive an education through 12th grade. A boarding option was set up for students in rural schools to study the four year high school program at low cost. 90% of the rural students by 1939 elected to continue their education at the city high school. Campton Was superintendent of the consolidated Lake County school districts for 31 years overseeing the consolidation, transition, and rebuilding of the district into a nationwide model of how to offer equal educational opportunities to both rural and city residents. January 8th, 1946 he submitted his resignation to the Lake County School Board. 6 years later he was elected to his first term as legislator for the 57th district covering both Lake and Cook Counties. He served 3 consecutive terms in the Minnesota House, retiring from public service in 1959. Campton Elementary School at Silver Bay was built in 1956 and aptly named for him in recognition for all he did for Lake County Schools.



DRAWING 11 AM SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13TH

Ticket sales start September 18 and end November 6 or until all 800 tickets are sold.

Must be 18 years or older to participate. Need not be present at drawing to win.

VIRTUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

VIRTUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING BEGINS AT 6:00 PM
WITH ANNUAL UPDATE FOLLOWED BY PRESENTATION
ON PRESERVING THE WRECK OF THE SAMUEL P. ELY BY
STEPHEN B. DANIEL: AUTHOR, HISTORIAN, & DIVER

JOIN ONLINE AT [HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/6349133740](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6349133740)

Wreck of the Samuel P. Ely

Built in 1869 at the J.P Clark Shipyards in Springwells Michigan for the transportation of Iron Ore and other bulk goods. It became part of the Bradley fleet in 1881 and was a frequent visitor to the Duluth and Two Harbors ports. In 1885 the masts were removed and its main purpose became a towing barge behind a larger ship. October, 1896 it was being towed behind the schooner Hesper. October 30th, 1896 barge and ship were emptied of cargo and departed Duluth for the port of Two Harbors to be loaded with iron ore.

A storm developed during the afternoon, hampering the Hesper's efforts to reach port. In order to make the turn into Agate Bay, the ship's crew cut lines with the barge, causing it to crash into the breakwall. All 8 sailors on board the Ely were rescued by the Ella G. Stone. The wreck survived due to its location near the breakwall, out of the way of shipping traffic.

Since that fateful day, the shipwreck has encountered damage from storms and ship anchors before it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992. The Great Lakes Shipwreck Preservation Society (GLPS) was formed after the first stabilization project of lifting the collapsed deck in place and securing the hull to support the deck.

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Left: Schooner Samuel P. Ely Courtesy of University of Detroit Mercy Collection, Detroit, MI
Right: 98.50.93 Divers with bell March 1994 LCHS Collection

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Currently embedded in the stone rubble of the breakwall, the GLPS continues to monitor the condition of the wreck and has performed additional underwater preservation to help the ship survive for years to come. The shipwreck is used in conjunction with the Boy Scouts to train and educate Scuba Crew Scouts in the proper navigation through a shipwreck underwater. Please join Steve to learn more about this fascinating local shipwreck that is a popular boat dive for many visitors to the north shore.

Stephen B. Daniel: Author, Historian & Diver

Steve has used his experience in research, drawing, communication, & leadership activities to help the Great Lakes Shipwreck Preservation Society. Past president and member of the Board of Directors, he is now coordinator of the Put-It-Back program.

Author of *Shipwrecks Along Lake Superior's North Shore, A Divers Guide* (2008 MNHS Press) and co-author of *S.S. America, A Diver's Version of the Past* (2000 GLSPS) with Thom Holden. Steve is an advanced trimix certified diver and enjoys diving on shipwrecks both on the Great Lakes and in the oceans. He uses his drawing skills to create proportional representations of Lake Superior shipwrecks that divers use for orientation when diving on the wreck.

After a short retirement from a 40-year career at 3M Company, Steve relocated to Duluth and worked 2 years for Cirrus Aircraft on the SF50 Jet interior assembly and later as a Census Field Manager with the US Census Bureau for the 2020 census. He retired again and is currently active in Duluth as the vice commander of Division 30 for the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.



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Jody Zastera In Memory of Carolyn Zastera
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LAKE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND LIGHTHOUSE BED & BREAKFAST

PHONE: (218) 834-4898

E-MAIL: LAKEHIST@LAKECONNECTIONS.NET

OFFICES: 520 SOUTH AVE

THE MISSION OF THE 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.



Save the date for our virtual
membership meeting

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 3RD

6:00 PM via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6349133740>

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