

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

Phone: 218-834-4898
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All Sites Open for the Season!

Lighthouse	10 AM to 4 PM	Thurs.—Mon.
Depot	10 AM to 4 PM	Thurs.—Mon.
3M Birthplace	11 AM to 4 PM	Fri.—Sun.

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

Summer 2021



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Great Start to Summer Season

We are off to a great summer season! Welcoming over 2,500 visitors to our historic sites so far this season, the frontline staff at all sites have been phenomenal in greeting and helping all guests.



Displays in the Frontenac Pilot House on the Lighthouse Grounds

Our hours at the museums have been shortened this year due to staffing shortages. The Depot and Lighthouse Museums are open Thursday through Monday 10 AM to 4 PM and the 3M Birthplace Museum is open Friday

through Sunday 11 AM to 4 PM.

The first train of the season arrived at the Depot July 2nd! Returning for the first time since October 2019, come down to the Depot Friday through

Sunday around 12:00 to watch the historic cars pull into the station!

Have you followed the Society on Facebook? The programs committee has been posting weekly history snippets inspired by the Two Harbors News Chronicle and Iron Port in decades past. Complemented with historic photographs and collections items learn a little bit more about local history each week!



facebook.com/LakeCountyHS

Keep the Light Lit Merchandise

After an 18 month absence from the Two Harbors Skyline, the beacon is lit again! On June 2nd, 2021 the society held a staff appreciation luncheon to celebrate the occasion.

The newly installed beacon is a stationary flashing LED light and is a temporary replacement while the Society raises funds for a modern light

that will restore the iconic sweep to the North Shore. The estimated cost for an upgraded rotating LED beacon is \$60,000.

To help raise funds the Society has started a t-shirt campaign on Bonfire! Purchase your t-shirt and have it shipped directly to you from the website. A limited quantity and color will be available for purchase in the store

starting in August. Proceeds from the t-shirt sales will go directly into the lighthouse beacon fund!



<https://www.bonfire.com/keep-the-light-lit-2/>

Sounds of Summer: Lake County Fair



Image of the first Fair October, 1907. Copied from Two Harbors in 1910.

Early fairs were a place where farmers could network, view innovations in farming, and learn about agricultural practices. It was also an opportunity for the state and counties to advertise the economic opportunities that could be realized through farming across the state of Minnesota. The first territorial exposition of the Minnesota Agricultural Society took place in 1855 in Minneapolis. By 1868, agricultural societies were beginning to receive financial support at the state and county level.

With the population of Lake County booming with the construction of the railroad, September 23rd 1907, a collection of local businessmen and farmers formed the Lake County Agricultural Society with an annual membership of \$1. Promoting dairying, livestock raising, and opportunities for root crops and cereals in the area the group quickly organized a display.

October 19th, 1907 the inaugural exposition of the Lake County Agricultural Association was held at the old post office building on 6th street between first and second avenues from 10:30 AM to 1:30 PM. Calls went out in the Two Harbors Chronicle for residents to submit produce, home, and baked goods to be displayed on simple wooden tables. Each category would be judged by a panel and premiums

awarded to winning entries.

A resounding success, the second fair expanded to include livestock and programs on farming techniques and celebrated the 25th anniversary of the town of Two Harbors. Permanent buildings were built on the West end of 4th and 5th avenues in 1913, expanding exhibit space. As the fair began to be constrained by the residences that had sprung up around the fair buildings, one decade later the fair



00.1213 Premium Prize Winning Exhibit, 1918 Minnesota State Fair

moved for a second time to county road 2 and 8th Avenue (present-day site of Lake County Arena).

Demonstrations of new technology were always large draws for fairs and were early forms of entertainment. In the 1930s and 1940s, additional forms of entertainment began to take center stage at fairs including races, rides, and music. Entertainment highlighted local bands and were normally sponsored by local businesses.

One of the more unique events at the Lake County fair in the 1960s was the annual watch drop sponsored by Hopper Jewelry Company of Two Harbors. Scheduled on the last day of the

fair, all participants on the fairgrounds would watch the sky in hopes of catching a new watch dropped from a plane flying over the fairgrounds. Other staple entertainment included political speakers, Two Harbors City Band, and the midway rides.

Under an agreement made in 1965 with the Lake County Education Board, the old fairgrounds buildings were razed to make way for a state of the art ice arena in 1966. In 1967, the county fair utilized the new arena as an exhibit hall and hosted a midway in the parking lot. With the size constraints of the arena and surrounding parking lots, livestock exhibits at the fair were suspended.

After many years of petitioning from local 4-H groups to add livestock exhibits back into the fair the competitions returned to the fair in 1981. In the early 1980s, the fair moved for a third time further down County Highway 2 to its present location. 115 years after the founding of Lake County Agricultural Club, the county fair continues to celebrate the county's success. This year, the fair returns to Two Harbors! Experience the Lake County Fair when it returns to the fairgrounds August 5th-8th!



05.27.01 Lake County Fair c. 1915

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00.1236 : Dairy cow judging at Lake County Fairgrounds. Note the houses behind the livestock building.