

OLD NEIGHBORS – DULUTH AUTOMOBILE CLUB

Lake Auto Club began operations on the beautiful shoreline across from the Canosia Town Hall.

In the beginning, there was a sawmill and the first Pike Lake School on this property. Thomas Butler built a hotel near the lake and, after his death in 1892, the Howard Kendall family took over. His stagecoach brought customers to the lake while Mrs. Kendall ran the hotel and provided meals for the Duluth Boat Club. After Kendall drowned in the Duluth ship canal and she died in the 1918 Forest Fire, the property went to the heirs.

By 1921 the Duluth Automobile Club had acquired this property for \$15,000. The hotel porch was remodeled with larger windows; there were more dining tables, an expanded kitchen and a dance hall with a fireplace. Several large bathhouses were near the lake and the handsome old Kendall stagecoach was parked near the hotel. There were tennis courts, horseshoe pits and a baseball diamond. And there was parking for 200 automobiles.

The Grand Opening in June of 1921 was amply described in several Duluth News Tribune issues. One headline read: “Two Thousand Attend Opening Ceremony.” The Morgan Park band played “America” and a cannon was fired. Mayor Snively was there but it was speaker Judge Magney who, in describing his own travel experiences, on foot and by carriage, to Pike Lake, echoed the stories many Canosia Township pioneers had told their families about the journey to their homesteads.

The Automobile Age seemed to arrive suddenly in this area. The 1901 Duluth newspaper reported the first automobile driving into downtown Twig. Soon people were setting new records by driving to the Iron Range in three days. Within a few years, the country had Ford’s assembly line, cheap Texas crude and a new auto speed record of 100 mph. But local roads were of often very poor, as the Duluth Auto Club reported in their weekly newspaper column.

The year after the Pike Lake Auto Club opened, the Miller Trunk Highway to the Range, all 54 miles, was dedicated in a grand opening ceremony. It was the

beginning of an exodus of Duluthians to the Auto Club and Pike Lake that continues to this day.

Kathryn Adams and The Canosia Historical Society