

# Manistee North Pierhead Light

On June 30, 2011 the Manistee North Pierhead Light was transferred from the Department of the Interior to the City of Manistee and the Manistee County Historical Museum in a ceremony at Fifth Avenue Beach. For many people the lighthouse and its accompanying catwalk represent Manistee's history, its beauty, and its values. It is an invitation to Manistee's safe harbor and lights the way to the "Victorian Port City" for great lake freighters, charter boats and recreational boats.

## Virtual Tour

In 2014 a very generous donation of time and technology was made to the community by **Ken Cummings of the Manistee based Real 3D Places and Steve Schuchard and Larry Louzon from 3D Laser Advantage**. The process began when Steve and Larry spent two days in September 2014 using a FARO scanner that scanned the inside, outside and catwalk.

The scanner fires millions of lasers in all directions to conduct measurements, down to a fraction of an inch in accuracy. The lasers reflect off all surfaces, and the scanner captures their intensity upon return to gather distance information. From there the scanner takes a photograph to give measurements color. Each scan took eight minutes to complete, and they measured up to 100 yards away.

Ken then used the data to create a virtual tour of the lighthouse. You can now experience the interior construction and design of this icon of the community. Also you have breathtaking views from the lighthouse that were only available to a limited number of people in the past. This work was done at no cost to the community and the data that was collected will assist with the restoration of the Lighthouse. ***Thank you Ken, Steve and Larry!!***

## Restoration

The major purpose of acquisition of the [Manistee North Pierhead](#) Light was to maintain the visual image of the light and the associated elevated walkway for the public from both land and water. Secondary will be interpretation and access to the structure itself in the future. The construction of the lighthouse limits universal access to the facility because there are four steps into the structure.

The [Manistee County Historical Museum](#) is in charge of the Lighthouse and is working on raising the necessary funds to restore the lighthouse. Restoration plans include removal of hazardous materials, repainting the exterior and interior of the lighthouse and make necessary repairs to the interior of the lighthouse. After the renovation is complete, the Lighthouse will then become a museum that will be open for public tours.



*The lighthouse at Fifth Avenue Beach has been a scene that most local residents identify with when thinking of this area. Fundraising is taking place and to assist in the grant process and the Real3D Places and 3D Laser Advantage created 3D images of the Lighthouse on September 12, 2014*

[Click to start your tour](#)

If you are interested in helping with the Restoration please call the Manistee County Historical Museum at 231.723.5531. If you wish to donate to the project please send your checks to the Manistee County Historical Museum, 425 River Street, Manistee, MI 49660.

## History



*Lighthouse circa 1940*

Manistee has been a major port, at one time the third busiest port on Lake Michigan, since the 1850's. It began with the export of lumber. Lumber continued to be a major export till the beginning of the 20th Century joined by salt in the late 19th Century. Salt, brine, and chemicals continue to be exported today. Many of the industries around Manistee Lake use great lake shipping as part of their operation. The first lighthouse marking the Manistee Harbor was built on shore in 1869. In 1875 the light was moved to the south pier and in 1893 the light was moved to the north pier.

In the 1920's the Corps of Engineers completely rebuilt the north pier. In 1926 construction began on the current lighthouse with completion in 1927. The Manistee North Pierhead Light is a tapering steel cylindrical tower, 38 feet tall with a nine sided eight foot lantern atop. The light is atop a U.S. Corps of Engineers 1,300 foot concrete pier approximately a quarter mile from the shoreline. The pier originates on the shoreline immediately adjacent to a public parking lot reached by Fifth Avenue and Lakeshore Drive. The U.S. Coast Guard Station is adjacent to the public parking lot. The adjacent shoreline is a municipal beach (Fifth Avenue Beach) and park.

The pier, catwalk, and lighthouse stand together as a symbol to the people of Manistee of the importance of the port during the late 19th and early 20th Century. The Manistee North Pierhead Light is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. The Lighthouse has one of the four remaining catwalks on Lake Michigan.

The Catwalk was transferred to the City of Manistee in January 1990, when it was declared surplus property. The Catwalk is not attached directly to the lighthouse although there is evidence on the inside that it was once fastened with 3/4" bolts. The door to the elevated walkway is about 45 degrees or 1/8 of the diameter to the southwest end of the elevated walkway. There is an approximately 36" wide board walk extension framed with wood timbers and an angle iron support on the outside. The walkway safety rail (cable) continues to the sealed door. Due to safety concerns the Catwalk is not accessible to the public.