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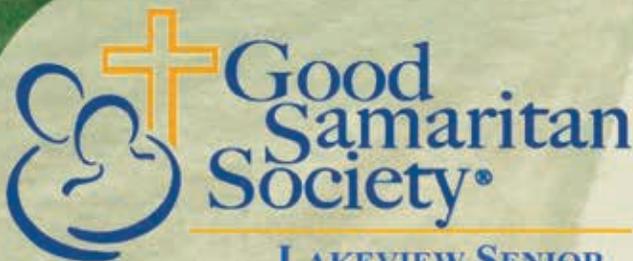


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STORY AND PHOTOS BY REBA GILLIAND

*Front cover photo:
Jona Brown, 4th generation Swan Laker*

Photo at left: Canoeing on Swan Lake, 1912

OTC

Otter Tail County

Spring 2021

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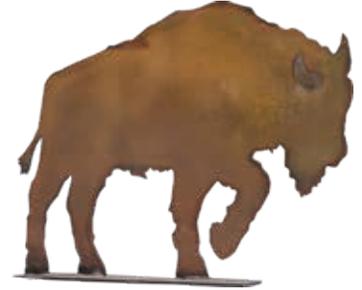
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Otter Tales

Summer!! We finally can have a normal summer again. As you can see, Boomer has always been used to a normal summer with his spot on the pontoon – even during last year’s social distancing. Golden doodles are weird and have this habit of standing their front feet off whatever they are laying on. Like half on and half off. Whether it’s the back sun bench on the pontoon or the sofa in the basement...must be the most comfortable, my guess...still weird.

Speaking of comfortable, this summer issue is another good one to cozy up with in a deck chair on a nice summer morning with a good cup of coffee and enjoy the great stories. My favorite one is about the Swan Lake Club, where a bunch of neighbors got together a long time ago to buy some lakeshore and enjoy the endless summers together. Made me wonder if neighbors of this era could ever be that

close and do something like that again. It would be nice to think so, but with all this division of late, I’m not so sure. I’ll keep hoping.

Next up is our history piece on Butler Township. Again, I can’t believe the hardship these folks went through to start from scratch in a new place. This is the first time I’ve heard that large eastern land companies of long ago advertised (or oversold) possible farmland to folks in foreign countries. Once here, they had no money left to change their mind...wow! I’m assuming those companies made some money overselling land to these folks who had to trust what they read or heard. It sounds a little dishonest, if you ask me. But it also reinforces in me the values, hard work and determination of these same folks to make the best of it as they built a great community from nothing that still exists today. It’s what makes this state and country great!

We also have a great journey to Voyageur’s National Park, a great recipe with my favorite food (rhubarb), and a story of raising bison (buffalo) – which sent me off on a daydream of what the Dakotas and parts of Minnesota must have looked like with millions of these huge animals running around...surely something to see.

Well, I’m off to see if Boomer will come out of the lake. He never does without great reluctance... like dragging kids in before dark when they are all out having fun. Be sure to enjoy your “normal” summer everyone – the cool mornings on the deck, the coffee...and the read.

Thanks!

— Ed Pawlenty, *OTC* Publisher



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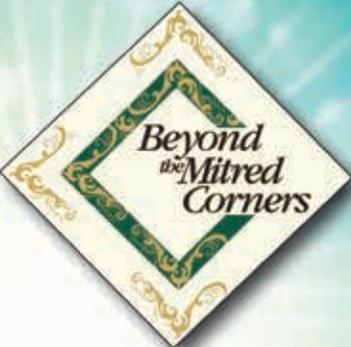
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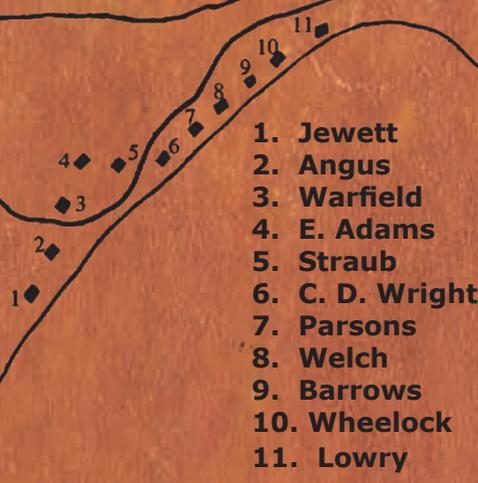
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LYE LAKE

First cottages were located on brow of hill

Drawing from *Beloved Lake*, page 7



1. Jewett
2. Angus
3. Warfield
4. E. Adams
5. Straub
6. C. D. Wright
7. Parsons
8. Welch
9. Barrows
10. Wheelock
11. Lowry

The Swan Lake Club

BY REBA GILLIAND

PHOTOS BY REBA GILLIAND, JONA BROWN,
OTTER TAIL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
& JENNY PIAZZA



SWAN LAKE
1900

In 1894, a group of 13 congenial neighbors in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, bought a forty acre tract of land on the North shore of Swan Lake, five miles southeast of town. They decided they needed an organization, and called themselves the Swan Lake Club.

— *Beloved Lake* by Kate Wright and fellow members of the Swan Lake Club, 1979.

The Swan Lake Club was organized in 1894. Whatever became of the Club? Fourth, fifth and even sixth generation Swan Lakers can tell you about it: the lake; the cabins with big screened-in porches; the stories accumulated over 13 decades of swimming and boating, games and get togethers; the transition from no phones to cell phones; and, above all, the magic of endless summer.

This is their story as much as it is their forefathers and foremothers – but we begin with the founders, for it is their ingenuity, grit and endurance that started it all. (See **Swan Lake Club's Founders** at right.)

Swan Lake

Swan Lake was undoubtedly the magnet that drew these men and women to such an improbable endeavor. Known for sandy beaches, clear water, and elm, oak and linden woods, the north shore of Swan Lake and the land between Swan and Lye (Chautauqua) lakes had long been a destination for excursions, picnics and camping parties. It was also convenient—the nearest lake to town of any size, so close that “businessmen can come in mornings and go out at night,” according to the *Daily Journal*.

George B. Wright owned the land and put in a foundation for a cottage, but never built on it. His son, Vernon, sold the land to the Swan Lake Club's founders on behalf of his father for \$400. To raise the money, each put in \$50, which paid

for the 40 acres with money left over for fencing, a road, or whatever else was needed.

Swan Lake Club

The Swan Lake Club's first recorded meeting was December 5, 1894. Like pioneers before them, these inventive men and women set about to bring the necessities and conveniences to Swan Lake that would allow families to spend summers there.

Swan Lake Club's Founders

Fergus Falls, just 22 years old in 1894, had grown to a town of almost 6,000. The town was booming, and men were finding their way to Fergus to work, raise families and increase their fortunes. The 13 men who purchased the north shore of Swan Lake were for the most part educated, in their 30s, and in the process of establishing careers.

Many of their names are familiar because of the businesses they started or positions they held in early Fergus Falls. George Lowry was associated with land and mortgage. Charlie Warfield was president of Fergus National Bank. George B. Wright's nephews, C.D. Wright and C.J. Wright, were in banking and land respectively. Elmer Adams was editor of the Daily Journal and later a state legislator. Frank Straub opened a jewelry store and later served on the City Council. E.A. Jewett and Frank Adams began as cashiers with First National Bank. Dick Angus was a land man. Harry Wheelock started Wheelock's Weekly, worked at the Daily Journal, and later became postmaster. Entrepreneur Fred Barrows started an electric plant, a saw mill and the Fergus Falls Gas and Mill Company. Will Parsons established

Work began at once. The first order of business was to buy two row boats; the second was to build an icehouse. The icehouse was filled with ice harvested from the lake in winter to use in refrigeration and to melt for drinking water in summer.

They platted the grounds and established the arrangement of a common dining room, cottages and other buildings. They decided on a right of way

into the property and built a road. They built a dock. They drew lots for sites and selected the brow of the hill on which to build their cottages. (See the drawing on page 9 showing the location of the first cottages on the brow of hill in 1900. Drawing from *Beloved Lake*, page 7.)

Original Summer Cottages

Cottages were primitive affairs: one room with a smaller construction behind for a kitchen, "Kentucky style." Mrs. Warfield who came from Kentucky assured them this was the way to avoid the danger of fire and keep the heat of cooking out of the main house.

The arrangement proved to be untenable, however: when it rained one needed an umbrella to keep dinner dry on the way to the table. By the 1890s, kitchens were attached to the house via a passageway.

Cottage building was slow going: all men worked most of Saturday, so Sunday afternoons were the only times they could devote to Swan Lake. Most families built their cottages themselves, camping until the dwelling was complete. One family lived in a tent for a couple years before beginning to build; another moved a granary across the ice to use as a cottage.

Finally, Swan Lakers settled into summer cottages replete with the convenience of mosquito netting as screens and oil lanterns for light. "Necessary houses" were no doubt tucked away at the edge of the woods. They had no running water, however, and had to haul buckets of water from the lake up the hill to their cottages.

Roads and Transportation

Roads were a continual challenge: 1900: "The road wasn't the best of roads. There could be a long time in the Spring when it was impassable." 1919: "Mr. Adams was on motion made a committee of one to arrange for a better drag and to arrange with the Town of Buse on road work." 1923: "Roads need work." 1958:

a law practice and later became a judge. Dr. Welch was the Regional Treatment Center (RTC) Superintendent.

Considering the enduring nature of the Swan Lake Club, it is surprising how little these men had in common. Though all professional men, their disciplines spanned retail, banking, journalism, law, administration and land. No commonalities can be found in alma maters, and while Fergus was home to some, others came from Kentucky, New York, Massachusetts, Maine and Scotland.

It turns out neighborhood was the common denominator: houses back-to-back, across the street, or just down the way on familiar Fergus streets: Vernon, Union and Court. Only the Welch's were a mile away at the RTC, but that didn't prevent close relationships from forming among the families or keep the men from walking a mile in frigid winter for a game of whist.

Today, it's hard to imagine 13 unrelated families coming together to purchase 40 acres, organize a club, and move forward on all matters by committee, but they did. Their story is as captivating as it is enduring.

roads were graveled within the Camp. 1965: "C.G. Wright to look into the matter of dustproofing the road." And so on.

Even the placement of roads was an issue: 1912: "Arrangements finally became completed with the township to run a public road along the edge of Weibe's farm. Then complaints about the road within the camp surfaced."

Early on, Swan Lakers needed good roads as automobiles were on the horizon. Vernon Wright showed up with the first electric car at the lake in 1907; soon three more Club members had electric cars, and then everyone did. Shortly after, Mr. Wheelock brought a motorcycle to camp. Automobiles were a novelty at the time, but before long they replaced horses, bicycles and the train as the main form of transportation to and from the lake.

Telephone, Electricity, Water

Utilities are hardly the stuff of which dreams are made but, as early Swan Lakers can surely attest, life without them is hard. Thirteen ingenious men, perhaps at times one or two alone and other times in concert, did at Swan Lake what it took government and whole industries to do for city residents – they brought utilities to the Swan Lake Club.

Telephone: 1912 Club minutes: "Executive Committee instructed to interview telephone company relative to terms of purchase of telephone line." In 1915, a plan was proposed that resulted in the installation of two telephones in outside booths for common use (the women complained – the booths looked like outhouses); by the early 1920s each cottage had its own wall phone and a unique ring (a combination of short and long rings – the ring for fire was 25 short); in 1954, the Club sold the line to Northwestern Bell.

Electricity: April 1921 Club minutes: "Contract with Dane Prairie Rural Telephone Company." The contract laid out the terms for installing an electrical distribution system within the camp so members could connect; by 1929 every

member had electricity – no more lanterns. In 1953, the Club voted to sell the camp electrical distribution system to Otter Tail Power.

Water: Carrying pails of water up a steep hill for cooking and other uses must have grown old quickly. The solution was a system that depended on a pump operated by a gasoline engine with dry battery ignition. It pumped lake water up to a tank on the hill, from which pipes ran at ground level to the various cottages.



Swan Lake, Fergus Falls, circa 1912

(Photo #9753 from the collections of the Otter Tail County Historical Society)



Elsie & Brownie's children in front of their Swan Lake cottage, 1923 (Photo courtesy of Jona Brown)

Sam Adams, engineer and neighbor to the water pump, was appointed Water Commissioner and charged with keeping the water running. April 1927 Club minutes: "Pres. Adams reported... The old water system has become old and inadequate."

At that meeting, the club voted in favor of installing a gravity system, a tank on a tower and an electric engine with automatic start-up and shut-off. By 1968 all cottages had their own well and the common water system was abandoned.

Children's Paradise

At heart, the Swan Lake Club was for children. Children of every age took part in what lazy summer weeks at the lake had to offer: swimming, rowboats, canoes, sailing, fishing, bonfires on the beach, ice cream at Sunday dinner, Fourth of July fireworks, picnics, boxes of toys on every porch, children's plays. For parents and older children there were baseball games, a hard surface for basketball and tennis, water-skiing and, among other entertainments, charades.

Meanwhile...

While children roamed the Camp, ever ready for the next adventure, parents dealt with no end of challenges. Nettles and thistles had to be dealt with. In drought years, fallen limbs and trees called for woods management. Worm infestations stripping trees required insect control, and lake weeds and mosquitoes were sprayed.

All of lake life occurred, of course, against the backdrop of a larger regional, national and even world context, which affected Swan Lakers in various ways: the cyclone, the drought years, wars, the depression, modernization, and social changes. Still, the Swan Lake Club continued through it all.

Transitions

Over time, Swan Lake Club membership evolved: a member would die or a family move; toddlers would become teens, then young adults and leave for school or a job or a war; the next generation would marry, and a new generation was born. Cottages changed too – some were updated, some torn down, others built new. But it is those cottages that have carried within their walls the record of the lives and times of the Swan Lake Club: structures built of wood harvested in the 1890s; from "Kentucky style" cottage design to big front porches overlooking the lake; cellars, built in deference to the 1918 cyclone; appendages tacked onto cottages to accommodate growing families



*Brownie in his hand-made sailboat, 1923
(Photo courtesy of Jona Brown)*



*David L. Brown with children Henrietta, Florence,
David Millard, 1923 (Photo courtesy of Jona Brown)*

until structures resembled the work of drunken sailors; furniture, like the rocking chairs Elmer Adams bought en masse for the cottages; mementos like a lintel with the heights of children as they grew.

Most of all, though, cottages carry the memories of the generations of families that spent their summers at Swan Lake, cottages filled with siblings, aunts and uncles, grandparents, cousins, neighbors and friends telling the stories of the "old" days whatever the year.

Each Swan Lake cottage has a story to tell – following are five of them.

Brown Cottage: C.J. Wright's daughter, Elsie, and her husband David L. Brown – one of the families added to membership when the Club voted to expand – built the Brown cottage in 1921. "Brownie" (David's nickname) built a sailboat in his basement in town to sail on Swan Lake, sturdy and strong and almost impossible to tip. (See photo on page 13.) Brownie died at just 39 years old in 1924, leaving behind Elsie and their three young children. (See more Brown family photos on pages 12 & 13.)

Brownie and Elsie's great-granddaughter, Jona Brown, is planning a celebration for the cottage's 100th anniversary this summer, where little has changed except the generations who come to swim, row, sail, canoe and play yard games. Only the vessels have evolved, with a paddleboard the latest addition, recently purchased by fifth generation Breanna, Jona's daughter. No doubt her brother, Logan, will enjoy it too. The celebration will be one of those social events that brings Swan Lakers together to enjoy each other's company and have fun each summer – one of the generational hallmarks of the Swan Lake Club.

Brownie and Elsie's progeny continue to enjoy the cottage, with their son's clan (David M. and Helen) spending July at the lake, while a daughter's clan (Florence and husband William DeBruyn) have the cottage in August. Jona has the perhaps unenviable job of managing their comings and goings.

Wright Cottage: Next door to the Browns is the cottage built by C.J. Wright's son, Charles Rolla (Elsie's brother) and wife Clara, who were also added to the membership rolls when the Club expanded. The side-by-side cottages were built at the same time and in the same style. These two families were neighbors in Fergus Falls, and the siblings and cousins were great friends at the lake as well as at home.

In time, the cottage turned over to another of the Wright lineage: Vernon's son Thomas and wife



Elsie with Peggy and her puppies in front of cottage on the bench Brownie built, 1923 (Photo courtesy of Jona Brown)

Thank you to the Swan Lakers who provided much information for this article, and to the Enquists for their invaluable store of materials about the Swan Lake Club. Special thanks for allowing access to the two delightfully written *Beloved Lake* books, which capture the life and times of Swan Lakers through 1994.

Kate bought it in 1937. Their daughter, Grace Wright, became a member of the Swan Lake Club in 1982 and owns the cottage today.

Piazza Cottage: When the old granary that George Lowry dragged across the ice by a team of horses in the late 1890s presented one too many challenges to great-granddaughter Jenny and husband Jerry Piazza, they decided to build a new cottage "to look and feel just like an old cottage."



*Piazza's new cottage built to feel like an old one
(Photo courtesy of Jenny Piazza)*



*Old cottage with the peak of the granary
visible in the middle
(Photo courtesy of Jenny Piazza)*

Not all old was lost, however. In rebuilding, they took off additions to the old granary that had been added haphazardly over the years and saved the original structure.

The old granary is now attached by breezeway to the new cottage serving as a guest house/teen hangout (visible in the top photo at left of the new cottage). "Honestly," Jenny says, "It was the only part of the old cottage that never leaked in the rain or showed any other sort of seasonal decay—amazing considering it pre-dated the 1890s cottage most likely by decades."

Jenny and Jerry enlisted Architect Dale Mulfinger of SALA Architects to design a new cottage to fit within the footprint of the old one. Mulfinger, expert on cabin design and lore, is known as "the cabinologist." Piazza's cottage has been featured in one of Mulfinger's books as well as in two magazines and the *Star Tribune*.

Enquist Cottage: Another cottage that was moved across the lake over ice belongs to the Enquists, who became Swan Lakers as the fourth owners of the original Rennie cottage. (Frank Evans, one of the founders, sold his unused membership to Katie Rennie, who had the cottage moved across the lake in 1915.)

When the cottage came on the market in 1991, Wayne and Andrea Enquist knew it was for them: they wanted a place close to the water, private, and convenient to their nearby farm. Wayne also knew Swan Lake well: he grew up on his grandparent's and parent's farm across the road from Swan Lake and mowed lawns for members when he was a teenager.

The original cottage is the heart of the house, with rooms added front, back and side over the years. Two additions to the front porch bring it just to the edge of the lakeside riprap. Other additions include a kitchen, two bedrooms and a back porch. As much as they love the place, Wayne says, "It needs a lot of fixing up—something every year."

In addition to family

gatherings and boating on the lake, the Enquists enjoy Swan Lake Club's social events, including happy hours that rotate through the cottages, and croquet tournaments. A couple years ago the Club had a storytelling evening, where stories were captured in a book for each member. Andrea especially enjoyed the Best Berry Pie contest, where she won a ribbon.

Hage (Adams) Cottage: By 1926, Elmer and Fanny Adams' family had grown to the point their cottage was bursting at the seams with children and grandchildren. Their son, Sam Philip, Sr. and wife Lucy decided to build their own cottage west of Elmer's and higher on the hill. Sam and Lucy had several children, including daughter Anne, the oldest of the Adams family, who grew up to marry George Hage. Anne and George's children, Phil, Betsy, and Dave Hage, spent many delightful summers at Swan Lake. Their mom, Anne, would negotiate a way to have summers off and she and the kids would load up the Ford Falcon and head to the lake. Dad would come up on weekends.

The Hage children's uncle Tuffy (Sam Philip, Jr., the youngest of the Adams family) and wife Ginny had the cottage next door. Dave remembers rainy days when a dozen kids – he and his brother and sister, cousins Carol and Jon Adams and kids from the next cottage over would build a big fire in the fireplace and read Superman and Archie comics until the rain stopped.

Cousin Carol, Dave remembers, was a "voracious" leader always with a theme for summer enactment. There was the summer of the King Arthur Knights, where they all traipsed through the woods with shields fighting dragons, and the year of snorkeling and diving inspired by Lloyd Bridges' *Sea Hunt*. Dave's mom would pile the kids in the car for a trip to the A&W or a movie in Fergus or a hike up Inspiration Peak – fond summer memories.

Dave and Phil became Swan Lake Club members themselves in 1990. Dave and wife Therese Sexe with their three children, and Phil

and wife Kathy Franzen carry on the generational progression of Swan Lakers.

Through all the transitions and changes, the workings of the Swan Lake Club remain remarkably stable. Members meet to conduct business and socialize; cottages are repaired and restored; kids swim and boat; families contract and expand; and generations look forward to their time at Swan Lake.

Dave Hage captures the essence of the Swan Lake Club: "Those of us who have been a part of



Wayne and Andrea Enquist by cottage on stairs to their dock



Enquist cottage... two earlier front-porch additions bring it SO close to the lake!

an experience like the Swan Lake Club are so very lucky — it's a legacy in a deep, deep way."



Reba: I'm indebted to the Swan Lakers who were around early in the season and who graciously made time for an interview.



There's lots going on in Battle Lake this summer and it all can be found at artofthelakes.org!

Workshops Saturdays in the Park

Short 3-hour classes for all ages in watercolor, oil, pastel, clay, and more! Register now for July & August classes.

Prairie Lakes en Plein Air

Plein air artists from throughout Minnesota are traveling to Battle Lake to capture Lake Country's beauty this summer. Meet them and admire their artistry as they work. For more info stop by the gallery or call us at 218-864-8606.

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Our 20th year and we're one of the largest rural art crawls in the Midwest! Guides with venue locales are available in the gallery and on our website.

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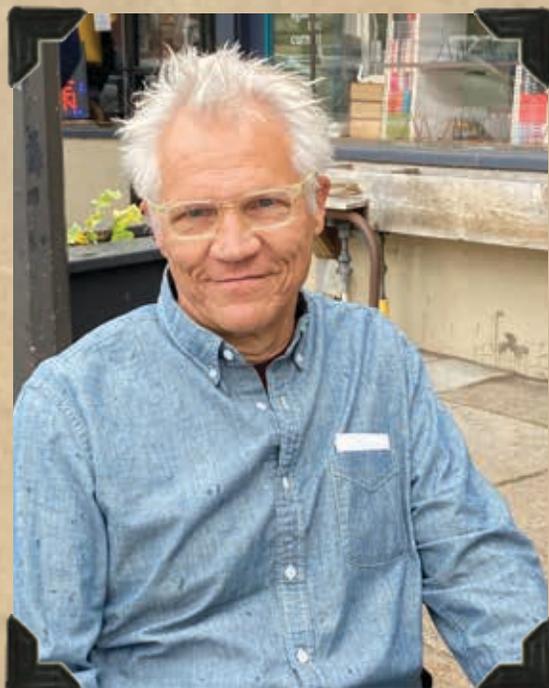
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artofthelakes.org

Art in the Heart of Lakes Country



Anne Adams, age 2, in front of Adams cottage Swan Lake, 1925 Photo #2650 from the collections of the Otter Tail County Historical Society]



Dave Hage (right) and brother Phil have a long history as part of the Swan Lake Club

(Their mother, Anne Adams, is pictured above)

Historic Butler Village & Township... *A little forgotten but full of life*

STORY BY BECKY TIGHE

PHOTO CREDITS: SEE PAGE 20

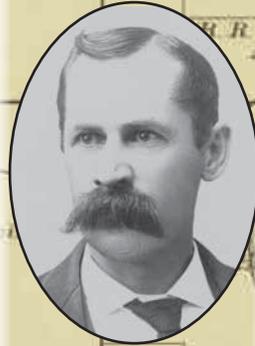
Butler Township History

Early on, there was an effort made to create a township that included the area eventually "embraced" by Butler, Corliss, Pine Lake and Homestead townships. It was refused in 1880 because it was deemed too large a tract for a township. Homestead was organized that year, but it wasn't until July 26, 1883, that Twp 137, range 37, presented its petition asking to be established as a civil township. Seventeen voters appeared before the board asking that the township be established with the name Red Eye, for the river that runs through the area. But Wadena County had already claimed and used the name, so the commissioners honored Steve Butler instead.

There were other factors in play as well: on May 28, two surveyors, Leo Fernbacher and Ed Washington, were robbed and savagely murdered while staying with the Trivit family who lived on what had been Amasa J. Pierce's first homestead. Jack Trivit reportedly killed them for their guns and valuable property. He fled to what was then the end of the N.P. Railway in North Dakota. Sheriff Butler captured him single-handedly.

Though Trivit hadn't initially resisted arrest, he attacked Butler while on the way to Perham, smashing his cuffed hands on the sheriff's head as they journeyed back to the county. Butler secured him in Perham's lockup, but on the night of June 9 a crowd broke him out and hanged him from a telegraph pole where the station later stood (the only lynching in Otter County history). The news created a sensation. Butler's name "was on every tongue." To honor him, the county board gave the township his name. The village also bears his name.

1884 Butler Township plat map from the collections of the Otter Tail County Historical Society



Butler Township

Location: 46-41'17"N
095-21'11"W

Elevation: 1,460 feet

Area: 35.7817 sq. mi.

Population: 283

Lakes:
Bear, Edna & Mud

Other:
Red Eye River, Bear Creek
& Braukmann WPA

Stephen Butler was an Odd Fellow

This is a compliment, as the Odd Fellows believe in the Universal brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God. Odd Fellowship was non-partisan, non-sectarian, and welcomed all people without regard to common barriers of the day. They believed that people who weren't alike could join forces for worthy purposes. Perham Lodge 1:10.38, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, was instituted April 19, 1888.

The charter included "S. Butler." Stephen Butler was one of their first officers, chosen "noble grand." Other first officers included Fred Buhr, vice-grand; E.L. Taylor, recording secretary; R. Manford, financial secretary; A.E. Luedke, treasurer.

Born in England in 1854, Butler came to the United States in 1872. Having resided in Perham and served as postmaster, he actually is best known for his time in law enforcement as Sheriff and as Otter Tail County Treasurer (1895-1911).

First settler Pierce explores NW Minnesota, chooses Butler Township

Amasa J. Pierce: Butler Township's First Settler

Pierce, the first postmaster of Butler Township, was born near Wolcottsville, Indiana, on July 3, 1848. His parents, Sanford and Mary (King) Pierce, were New York State residents, and his father was a descendant of John Pierce, who owned the *Mayflower*. Stephen K. Pierce was a first ensign in the New Militia when young. Married twice, he had a set of twin boys in 1848, Amos J. and Amasa J. His sword was passed down to Amasa and eventually inherited by Douglas Carl Pierce in 1961. The family moved to Wolcottsville, Indiana in 1837.

Amasa J. attended common school, worked three years as a farm hand in Missouri and three years back in Indiana. He then migrated to Douglas County, MN, where he married Martha McKibbon, daughter of an early Minnesota homesteader and a first cousin to William Jennings Bryan, in 1877.

Writing years later, Pierce said, "I started from Brandon (on 19th April, 1870) ... to look up me a homestead ... went to Parkers Prairie, then to Bluffton (left Bluffton on the 20th) ... with only a compass for a guide and only a walking stick for defence." He camped under a spruce without a blanket, somewhere in Wadena. Disliking the country, he started west, "going about 2½ miles, south of the prairie, wading sloughs and swamps,

until I struck an old logging road that came out on Big Pine Lake ... came out into the valley by Mr. Craye's hay road, with a load of others from Germantown and located on section 14, south of Butler."

Pierce was the first homesteader who claimed land in Butler Township. Others had pre-empted land, but only for speculation purposes (per an unsourced newspaper article). He bought 120 acres, lived on it for seven years, farmed in Minnesota and North Dakota, returning in 1896 to buy 80 acres in two 40-acre parcels and raise Jersey cattle, Shropshire sheep and bees. In his house on section 15 he ran the post office. He was justice of the peace for many years and served on the township board, to mention a few accomplishments. A member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Mr. Pierce had been Republican but became Prohibitionist (temperance). His first presidential vote was for Horace Preclay. He had to travel from Grand Rapids, Michigan, to LaGrange, Indiana, to cast his vote for Preclay.

In 1922 Pierce moved to Boot Lake, where he died in 1939. His great-great-great granddaughter Faye Hendrickx still lives in Butler Township with her husband Edgar, who runs the implement store.

Amasa J. and Martha Pierce





Butler General Store

below: Prudent Jacques General Store in 1913 after 1st communion of daughter. One of the original Dutch settlers who came to Butler in 1910, Jacques operated the store until he sold it to Jacques Hendrickx in 1920.



Bob & Mary Ann Braukmann in front of old log house in 1946. The log house was built in 1904 and the Braukmann family were its last occupants.

Special Thanks
to Faye Hendrickx for generously sharing photos and information from her collection of Butler Township historical materials, including the commemorative centennial issue, the Holy Cross church history book, and her personal family history book.

The Armed Robbery of 1974

Carrie Hendrickx, age 86, had operated the 76-year-old Butler Store for 50-some years on the 9th of January, when three men walked in and robbed the store at gunpoint. They wore long overcoats, had pulled nylon stockings over their faces and caps on their heads. Witnesses estimated their ages as "in their early 20s." Two had handguns and one what appeared to be a sawed-off shotgun. Having stolen \$80 from the till, they tied her up along with two others and ripped the telephone wires from the wall.

A girl of nine when she came to Butler via covered wagon, she and her husband had taken over the store in 1920. It also housed the Butler post office until 1954. It had been a good place to grab a cup of coffee and a little conversation. Carrie was really shaken up by the robbery. By Butler's centennial celebration in 1983, she was living in a nursing home in Perham, and the store, which had been established in 1898, was open only on a limited basis.



*Amasa Pierce Family
l-r, front: Dot, Ada, Amasa, Martha, Etna
l-r, back: Stella, Archie, Minnie, Frank & Elsie*



The "Beautiful" Dutch Immigrants Arrive

Fifty adults and 34 children began the wave of Dutch immigration to Butler. In spring of 1910, Butler Township, which was due north of New York Mills and hugged the Becker County line, became a settling ground for a Dutch colony.

The D.S.B. Johnson Land Company, which had large holdings around Butler, and a bishop from St. Paul were instrumental in bringing "the Hollanders" to Butler Township, according to a 1910 account in the *Fergus Falls Journal*. "They arrived in New York in the spring of 1910," the *Journal* reported, "wearing picturesque Dutch costumes." They were described as "the finest lot of emigrants, physically and intellectually, that had landed in New York in a long time."

Most of the early settlers had sold their land in Holland for as much as \$1,000 an acre, and the offer of getting land in America for \$20 an acre was alluring. They came from densely-settled areas in Holland and were unaccustomed to the conditions they found in the brushy country. The trees had been logged, leaving none suitable for building houses. Roads often were terrifying, swampy trails. The first year, only 14 inches of rain fell. A beautiful tobacco crop held out hope until hail destroyed it. The rough housing had knotholes that allowed snakes to come through the floor. Tar paper exteriors provided inadequate protection from the cold.

The Johnson Company moved the immigrants to the farm and built barns to house their Holsteins. The land company built a church, a parish and a

creamery as promised. Later, a cheese factory was constructed. A religious order from Holland even encouraged local residents to establish Holy Cross Church. It stands near Butler, on 40 acres. And the town's only business, a farm machinery dealership (dating back to 1936) is Hendrickx Implement, operated by a Dutch descendant who is married to a Pierce descendant.

*(The text above is from a special section of the **Fergus Falls Journal** of 1983, which celebrated Butler's Centennial Year. Minor modifications were made.)*





*Edgar and Faye Hendrickx
behind the counter
of Hendrickx Implement*



right: Generations of Amasa Pierce

*l-r, back: Faye Hendrickx (5th),
son Jeff (6th)*

*l-r, front: Jeff's children:
Jase, Jacob & Jana (7th)*



School District #165

circa 1930

The Red Barn Greenhouse

Once a barn, now restored and full of blooming beauty.



John Peeters and daughter Christina Kickhafer run the Red Barn Nursery



History buff's son lives in schoolhouse mother preserved



Tony Roberts' mother loved and preserved this schoolhouse, originally District #263.

Begun in 1903, classes were originally held in this building before it was renovated and made into a residence.

Now he lives in it and enjoys sharing it with visitors.



This sign hangs above the front door:





One of the original houses in Butler



Prayer Path at Holy Cross

Holy Cross Church

below: 1915 Confirmation class



above: Original church

below: 2nd church

right: Present day church



Becky Tighe considers Battle Lake folks the salt of the earth. However, she knows God has spread that savory saltiness to dear people in many places. Bad health has brought good blessings; she now lives in Hawley, MN, near 4 fine grandsons and their mom and dad, Angie and Ben. Becky hopes to write for Battle Lake folks again soon.



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Summer is Short in Minnesota...

Don't let Pain Steal a Single Day

BY DR. JASON GLYNN AND DR. CHRISTOPHER ROTT

Orthopedic Surgeons, Lake Region Healthcare

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LAKE REGION HEALTHCARE

What are you looking forward to this summer? Biking, golfing, fishing, hiking, going to the beach or heading out on vacation? Minnesota summers are made for getting outside and enjoying the short but sweet season. If bone or joint pain is holding you back from the activities you love to do, the Orthopedics and Joint Care team at Lake Region Healthcare can help.

In this article we'll answer some of the questions we receive most often about how our team can help people suffering from sports injuries to those considering hip and knee replacement.

What are some reasons people see Lake Region Healthcare's Orthopedics and Joint Care team?

We see a wide variety of people who are dealing with pain—some from acute injuries like fractures, sprains, dislocations and muscle tears. We also see those with long-standing chronic issues in their knees, hips, backs and shoulders that have come from months, if not years and decades of being active. We see people with bursitis and tendinitis and lots of people with arthritis.

How does a person know when it's time to see a doctor about their bone and joint pain?

As people continue to have birthdays—which we can all relate to—things don't always work quite the same as we remember, sometimes even from one year to the next. You may feel a twinge with that first swing of the golf club or the first time you cast a lure into the lake.

But, if what you're feeling is more than a twinge and you find yourself not doing something you'd like to do because it might make your bones or joints hurt, it is time to come see us. If your pain is controlling your life, come see us because we can probably make a change that's going to make you feel a whole lot better.

What are the options and treatments you provide?

There are a lot of options available for treating injuries and bone and joint issues. They can range anywhere from a few visits with a physical therapist or an occupational therapist, to potential injections or some sort of bracing treatments.

We have a great team of physical therapists and a great team of athletic trainers that help us with brace fittings and activity modifications.

We have a musculoskeletal radiologist, which you don't usually find at a hospital the size of Lake Region Healthcare. We have a team of podiatrists who do wonderful work and take care of all kinds of foot and ankle problems.

We also have a wellness hub at Lake Region Healthcare that has great programs for getting people moving and active again.

Even though we're surgeons, surgery for the most part is something we look at as, "Gosh, we've tried everything else there is to try, and surgery is what ultimately is going to fix this problem."



If someone needs surgery, what are the options available?

If surgery is needed, we have less invasive options that minimize swelling and pain afterward. We can provide arthroscopic fixes for sports injuries, be it ACL reconstruction, rotator cuff repair or dislocated shoulders. We also have unique ways to administer anesthesia that allow for less sedation after surgery.

What types of surgical options are there for joint replacement specifically?

We have a Joint Care Center with a highly trained dedicated team for those needing joint replacement surgery. We provide knee replacement and partial knee replacement surgery, as well as both traditional hip replacement and the anterior approach to hip replacement.

The anterior approach to hip replacement allows the joint to be replaced from the front of the hip. This lets the surgeon move muscles along the natural tissue planes. This approach often results in quicker recovery, less pain, and more normal function after hip replacement.

How long does it take to get in to see a sports medicine or orthopedic specialist?

Our team can see people the same day or the next day. We have express appointments that are really an advantage when you're looking at a sports injury, or an athlete who needs to be seen right away, or for anyone who has had enough of their bone and joint pain. We can get people on the right track with the right treatment, right away.



Dr. Glynn



Dr. Rott

About Dr. Glynn

Originally from Fergus Falls, Dr. Glynn received his undergraduate degree in Medical Engineering from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. He earned his medical degree from Northwestern University – Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago, Illinois. His orthopaedic surgery residency was done at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. He completed a fellowship in Orthopedic Sports Medicine at SOAR (Sports Orthopedics and Rehabilitation) in Redwood City, California.

About Dr. Rott

A graduate of Jamestown High School in Jamestown, ND, Dr. Rott went on to obtain his Bachelor of Arts degree in Biology at Northwestern College in Orange City, IA and his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree from Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine A.T. Still University of Health Sciences in Kirksville, MO.



The Lakeside Gourmet

BY SANDRA THIMGAN
PHOTO BY DAN THIMGAN

Rhubarb — Zucchini's Cousin?

Rhubarb Graham Muffins

Makes 12 regular or 6 large muffins

- 1 1/4 cups finely crushed graham crackers (1 sleeve)
- 1 cup all purpose flour
- 1/2 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- Pinch of salt
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup rhubarb, chopped into 1/4" pieces (if using frozen, see NOTE*)
- 1/3 cup shredded sweetened coconut
- Chopped crystallized ginger and/or decorative sugar, for sprinkling (optional)

Preheat oven to 375°. Coat muffin cups with cooking spray.

Whisk together cracker crumbs, flour, brown sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. In a small bowl, stir together the egg, buttermilk and oil. Add to dry ingredients and stir until just moistened. Fold in rhubarb and coconut.

Fill muffin cups two-thirds full. Sprinkle with decorative sugar and chopped ginger, if using. Bake for 20-25 minutes, until golden. Remove from oven and transfer to wire rack to cool. When cooled, carefully remove muffins from pan and serve.

*NOTE: If using frozen rhubarb, you will need at least 2 cups or more. Because we love the flavor, I used four cups frozen, thawed and drained. Bonus — the liquid, with a bit of sugar added, makes a refreshing summer drink!

I have numerous friends saying, "Do you want some rhubarb? Please??? We can't eat it all!" I haven't had any secret drop-offs, like sometimes happens in zucchini season, but I took them up on the offer and now have 20 packages of chopped rhubarb in the freezer! Needless to say, I LOVE rhubarb, the vegetable that acts like a fruit!

Here's a quick muffin recipe, with a twist, that will be great to serve for breakfast or a morning brunch at the lake. The addition of graham cracker crumbs adds a little "what is that?" crunch and flavor note to these muffins. I couldn't help adding the crystallized ginger, one of my favorite accents.



OTC
The Lakeside Gourmet

"Sharing recipes is part of our culture, enriching each one of us and binding us together."

Sandra Thimgan lives on Silver Lake with her husband/photographer/taster, Daniel.



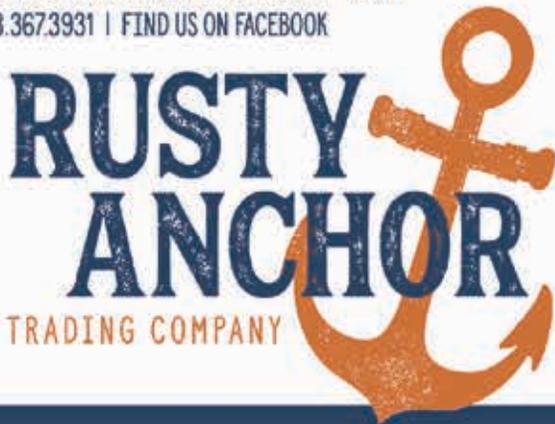


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The Rolling R Ranch Family

back: Dale & Beth Rengstorf, ranch owners

front: Rachal, P.J. (ranch manager), Myra, Karla & Marybeth Breen

(Photo courtesy of P.J. Breen & Jessica Fahje)

It Takes the Whole Family to Run This Operation!

STORY & PHOTOS BY JERRY BEGLEY

The Rolling R Bison Ranch prides itself on the pledge “We humanely and sustainably raise the healthiest red meat on the market today.” Their only product is bison meat, raised naturally on 2,000 acres of prairie grass in the rolling hills of northwest Otter Tail County.

On a cold winter day over 34 years ago, Dale Rengstorf was working on his farm. When the cold wind hit him in the face, he decided “the only thing this climate was good for was raising bison.” Taking that revelation to heart, he and wife Beth started the transition from raising pigs to raising bison, starting with 13 bison.

They were right. The ranch now nurtures over 700 bison, and their dedication has fostered a retail operation and participation in several bison organizations, one of which they founded.

Managing the massive bison herd is a 24/7 business. The 700 Rolling R bison are segregated into separate herds to manage their health, bloodline and grass feeding rotation. Mating season starts in July, and approximately 220 calves begin arriving in the spring. Although sometimes referred to as “Red Dog Season” due to the calf color, the calves are actually a beautiful cinnamon color. Maturing to over 2,000 pounds, they are a force to reckon with. While the Rolling R bison appear quite docile and satisfied, many tourists visiting parks can attest to the fact that bison can run up to 35 miles per hour, jump six-foot fences, and damage vehicles.

below: Spring calf





14-year-old "SMOKEY" weighs in at 1¼ tons - a whopping 2,500 pounds!.

below: Part of the Rolling R Bison Ranch herd with calves





above: Rolling R Bison Ranch sign (Photo courtesy of P.J. Breen)

Sketchy government records indicate that the American bison herd dwindled to 541 animals by 1889. Today, the herds total over 600,000, and that did not happen by chance. Striving to foster the bison industry, Dale and Beth invited fellow bison ranchers to their home in 1993 to discuss starting an organization, now known as the Minnesota Bison Association. Dale has served as president for 11 years and director for 12 years. He still serves as regional vice president and Beth serves as historian. The other major influence in bison resurgence is the National Bison Association (MnBA), of which Dale has served 12 years as a director.



l-r: P.J. Breen, Beth and Dale Rengstorf



left: Rolling R Bison Ranch received several trophies at the MnBA's 2020 Legends of the Fall Live Auction event, including Grand Champion Female (left), Reserve Champion Female (center), and Producer of the Year (right)

The prairie grass, rolling hills and ponds are a natural environment for raising bison, but the grassland is fragile. There is no crop rotation, so what starts in grass stays in grass – and bison are hungry animals! Dale, Beth and ranch manager P.J. Breen take specific measures to improve the soil as they use it, employing a regenerative process and erosion control procedures.

A 2,000 pound bison is also thirsty, and readily accessible, pure water is a daily requirement. Maintaining a healthy, dependable water supply is treated with great importance, and by doing so the ranch was awarded the first Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Water Quality Certified Farm in Otter Tail County.

In 2017, daughter Karla and husband P.J. Breen returned to Minnesota and joined the operation. They started **Otter Tail 23 Meats** and have partnered with Rolling R Ranch to provide locally-harvested bison directly to the community. (Do not call it beef!) Otter Tail 23 Meats offer whole bison, 1/2s, 1/4s and other selected prime cuts through Larry's Store in Pelican Rapids and through their website **breenenterprises.com**.

Rolling R bison are processed for commercial sale at the North American Bison Harvest and Processing Facility in New Rockford, ND. (And yes, Dale has been a director there also.)

Karla also finds time to teach special education in the Pelican Rapids school system. Combined with daughters Rachal, Myra and Marybeth, it really does take all seven family members to run this operation!



Rolling R Bison Ranch is a Minnesota Department of Agriculture Water Quality Certified Farm in Otter Tail County



A few examples of the cuts available from Otter Tail 23 Meats



Jerry Begley is a retired Regional Director for a telecommunications company and resides with his wife Diane on Stalker Lake. While he enjoys all outdoor activities, he is returning for the first time to utilize his journalism major in college.



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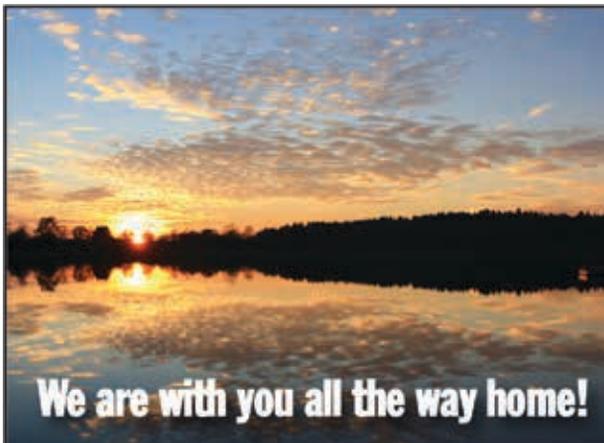
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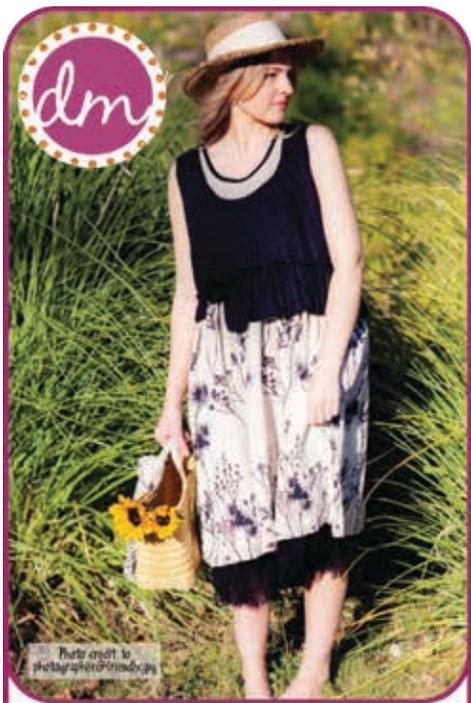


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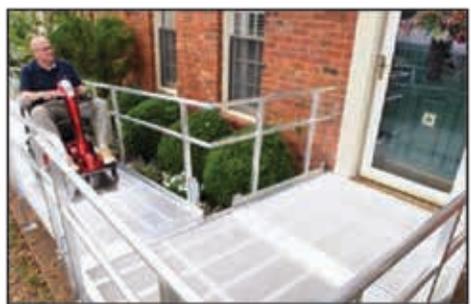
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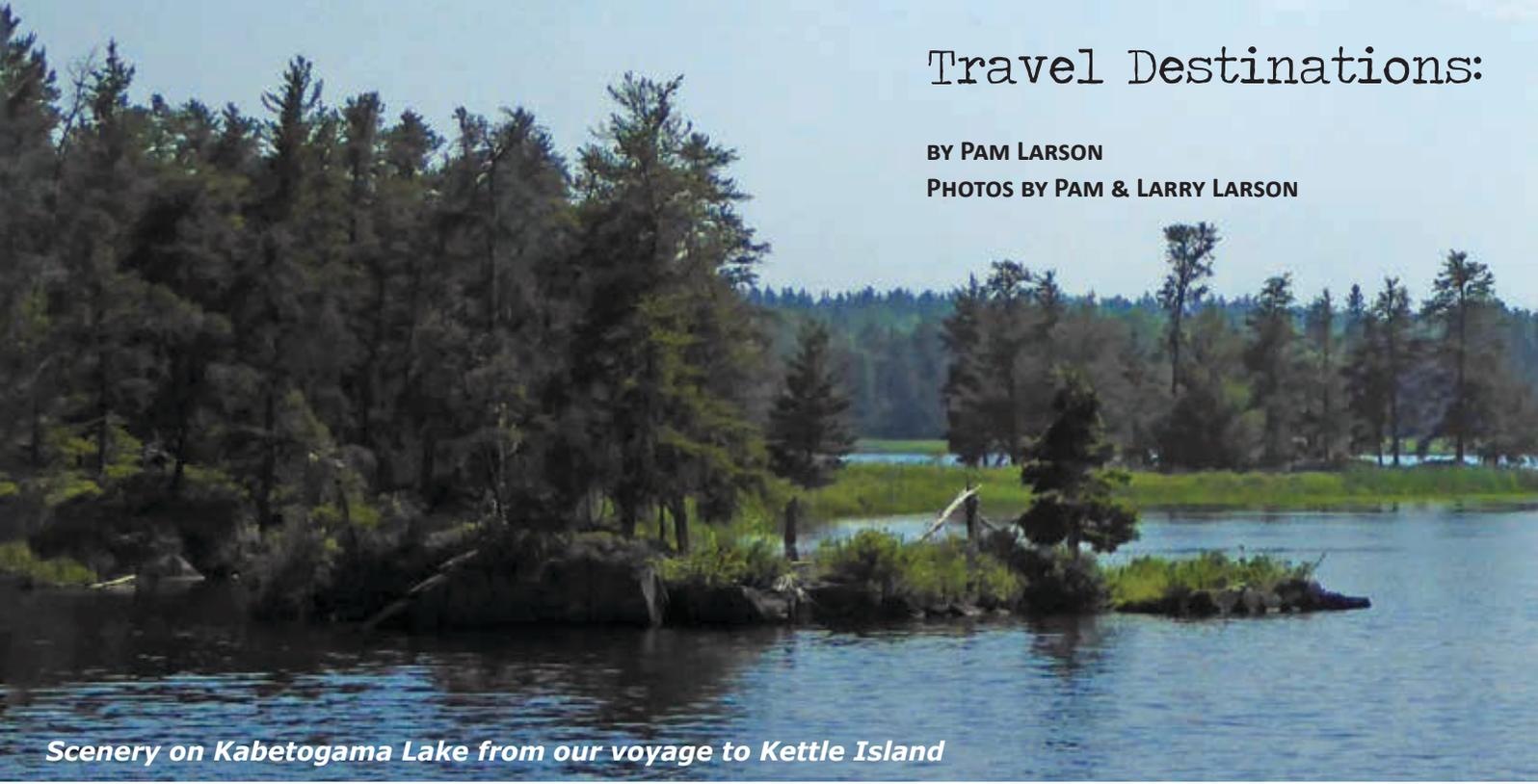
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Travel Destinations:

BY PAM LARSON

PHOTOS BY PAM & LARRY LARSON



Scenery on Kabetogama Lake from our voyage to Kettle Island

Trees, water, loons and bald eagles. These words bring to mind our great visit to Minnesota's own **Voyageurs National Park**. As National Park fans, we were delighted to mark this beautiful place on our national park check-list.

Established in 1975 in northern Minnesota near International Falls, the name honors the *voyageurs*, French for *travelers*, who were French-Canadian fur traders and the first Europeans to frequently travel through the area. The park is known for its incredible water resources and is popular with canoeists, kayakers, other boaters and fishermen.

The Kabetogama Peninsula, which lies completely within the park and makes up most of its land area, is accessible only by boat. To the east of the park lies the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.



Voyageurs National Park has no entrance fee, so it is free to visit the park at any time. Trails and visitor centers are accessible by land, but to fully experience the park's magnificence you will want to get out on the water. Many bring their own boats, but you can also book tours from the visitor centers. The park encompasses all or part of four major lakes: **Rainy Lake, Kabetogama Lake, Namakan Lake** and **Sand Point Lake**. Three of these lakes straddle the United States/Canada border.

There are four main ways to stay overnight in the park: remote tent camping, houseboating, drive-up camping, and lodges and resorts. We chose to stay at the **Fall Lake Campground** in **Superior National Forest** in our Scamp travel trailer (at left).

In addition to the park, there are several other interesting places to visit around the Ely area. Our first stop was the **International Wolf Center**, whose mission is to aid the survival of wolf populations by teaching about wolves, their relationship to the wildlands and the human role in their future. The facility offers a variety of educational programs for adults and families. The Center's main facility features observation windows with a view to a 1.25-acre wolf enclosure and den site that is home for the resident wolf pack.

Four wolves, born in April 1993, were the original ambassadors for the educational mission of the Center. They were joined by two arctic wolves in the summer of 2000. Since then, older wolves have been moved into a retirement enclosure, and new pups have been introduced to the pack about every four years.

Voyageurs National Park



*International Wolf Center
Ely, Minnesota*





left: Pam with the bear sculpture in its garden-like setting by the North American Bear Center's Northwoods Ecology Hall in Ely, Minnesota

below & lower left: Bears in their 2.5 acre natural northwoods enclosure.



The **North American Bear Center** is the only black bear and wildlife educational facility of its kind. Dedicated to replacing old myths with facts, it lets people learn from the bears themselves about bear behavior, ecology, and their relations with humans. An exhibit hall includes mounts of bears and other northwoods animals in habitat dioramas. Also featured are videos on vocalizations, body language, mating, fighting, nursing, hibernation, care of cubs, exiting from the den, foraging for different classes of food and play. A wall of windows overlooks the bear enclosure with its pond and waterfalls.

The Bear Center is home to four black bears living in a 2.5 acre naturally-forested compound. The bears forage on a variety of wild foods in the enclosure. The bears can be viewed from the inside viewing windows or from the outdoor viewing balcony.

Another place to view bears is the **Vince Shute Wildlife Sanctuary**, which has an interesting history. During the Great Depression, Vince Shute went to work in the logging industry and by age 25 had purchased his own company. Vince and his loggers lived in the remote north woods with wildlife as their only neighbors.

Black bears became a nuisance when the smell of cooked food attracted them. At first – and partly due to fear – the men would shoot the bears. But after a time, Vince sought a different solution. To keep the bears away from camp, he put food in a meadow for them. This method worked, and the loggers and bears coexisted.





Bear cubs at Vince Shute Wildlife Sanctuary, Orr, MN

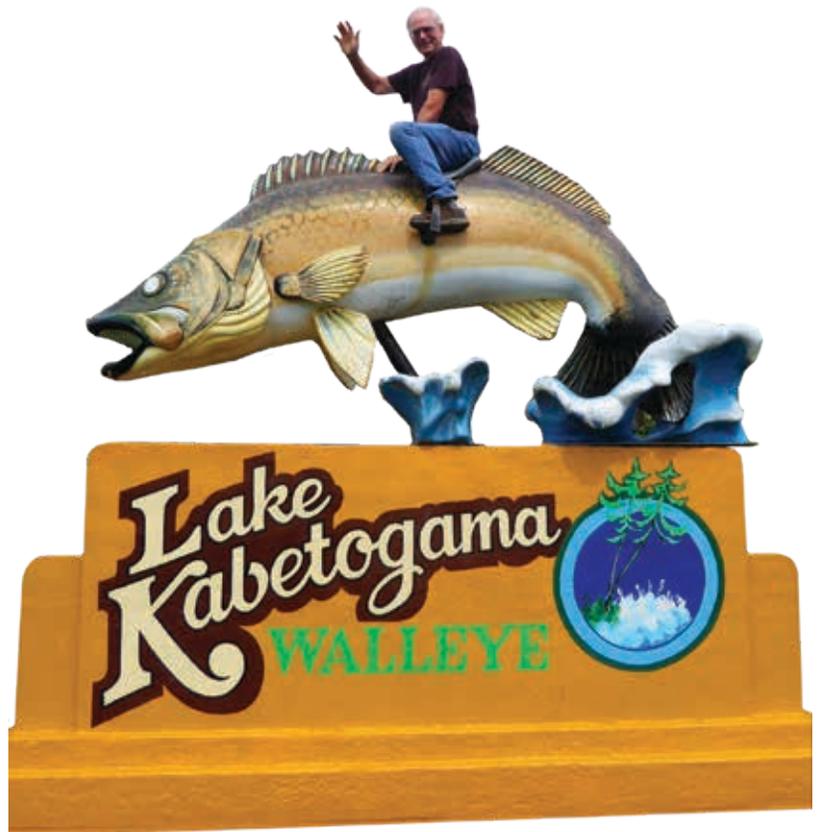
Soon local people began to visit and watch the bears. Vince, "The Bear Man," became quite a celebrity. Eventually, a non-profit organization was formed to maintain the two-acre sanctuary. The bears are free to roam in the wild, but return during their foraging season, at which time visitors can view wild bears in their natural habitat from an elevated viewing platform.

I am always on the look-out for large roadside statues as we travel, and I was not disappointed on this trip. A Voyageur statue was erected by the **Crane Lake Commercial Club** to commemorate the French-Canadian Voyageurs, who explored and opened this country beginning in the late 1600's. Thousands of these strong men rowed their birch bark canoes through waterways, searching for furs and the Northwest Passage. One of their forts was at the mouth of the Vermillion River in Crane Lake. The colorful clothing of these courageous men is typified by the memorial as he stands proudly surveying the lands and waterways he once roamed.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the sport of fishing in the area, so we stopped to get a photo of Lake Kabetogama's walleye statue. Larry was a good sport to sit in the saddle for a photo. This 60-year-old, \$2,500 concrete and steel 14-foot fish boastfully implies the size of fish in the area lakes. Walleyes are the second most abundant sport fish in Lake Kabetogama, with 25-inch catches being common. If you are lucky, it is possible to catch trophy fish of more than 30 inches.



Voyageur Memorial by Crane Lake





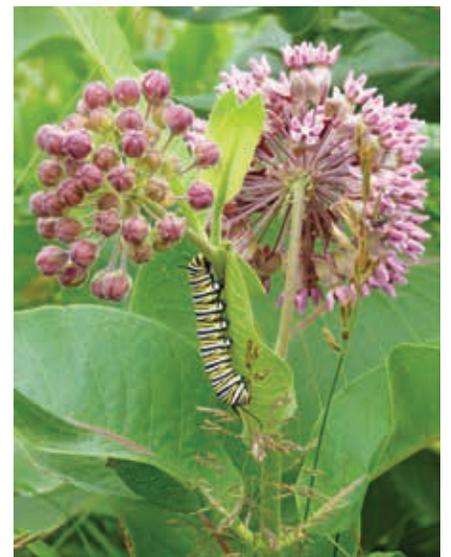
above: *Kawishiwi Falls*



left: *Tree with exposed roots on hike to Kawishiwi Falls*

On the way back to camp we stopped for a hike to the **Kawishiwi Falls**. In the Ojibwe language, *Kawishiwi* means *river full of beaver*. The one-and-a-half-mile round-trip trail offers wonderful views of the 70 feet drop. Native Americans, explorers and voyageurs portaged around the falls. The watershed drains from the **Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness** and flows 2,000 miles north to Hudson Bay.

We watched an informative film at the **Rainy Lake Visitors Center** before taking a boat excursion onto the lake. While waiting for the departure, we walked in the **Ojibwa Ethnobotanical Garden**, which displays a good representation of the plants of the park.



Milkweed with monarch caterpillar



Scenery on Rainy Lake

The boat tour guide narrated the history of the area as we headed to **Little American Island**, the location of the "Gold Rush of 1894". While camping, a local prospector had discovered a gold-bearing quartz vein. Mining activities developed quickly, along with Rainy Lake City to support the community with a school, bank, general store, hotels, restaurants, a newspaper, hardware store, butcher shop and several saloons.

After a few years, despite all the attempts to make gold-mining profitable on Rainy Lake, the low production of the mines resulted in a gold-bust by 1898. The "Boom" was over, and the Rainy Lake City school and newspaper office were closed. By 1901, the city was a ghost town. Remains of the mine entrances, as well as some of the mining equipment are still visible on the island, including one entrance that was right at lake level.



Tour boat at Rainy Lake Visitor Center



This wheel was attached to a winch that hauled gold-bearing rock to the surface on Little American Island



Little American Island Gold Mine entrance on Rainy Lake



Scenery on Kabetogama Lake



above: Kettle Falls Hotel

right: Blue flag iris on hotel grounds



The following day, we boarded another tour boat, this time from the **Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center** for our voyage to **Kettle Island**. The ranger-naturalist and boat captain were knowledgeable about the area, and we spotted many loons and eagles on the trip.

The destination of this trip was the **Kettle Falls Hotel**, which has a history as colorful as its bright red roof. It was built in 1913 by timberman Ed Rose for the stonecutters and masons who constructed the Kettle Falls dam.

Legend says the hotel was financed by Nellie Bly. Robert Williams bought the hotel in 1918 for \$1,000 and four barrels of whiskey. The original hotel was built without a foundation, so over time, the floor developed a slant. The floor is also pock-marked from loggers' hobnail boots. Renovations done by the National Park Service in 1987 retained some of the

character of the 'Tiltin' Hilton', including the slanted saloon floor.

The hotel now has a long tradition of hospitality for sport fishermen and other visitors. Visitors can enjoy a hearty meal or even spend the night, although it is a 13-mile boat ride from the end of the nearest road. The dam near the hotel was built on a little peninsula of land that is on the border, so you can actually stand in the U.S. and look south into Canada.

below: From Kettle Falls looking south to Canada



Common loon

Loon family





Our final night of camping ended with a stunning sunset over Fall Lake in Superior National Forest, a fitting closure to our visit to a lovely national park.

OTC

Pam Larson, a retired school librarian, lives in Fergus Falls with her husband Larry. Until more 'normal' travel possibilities return, they are happy to have adventures close to home. Minnesota is always a great destination!



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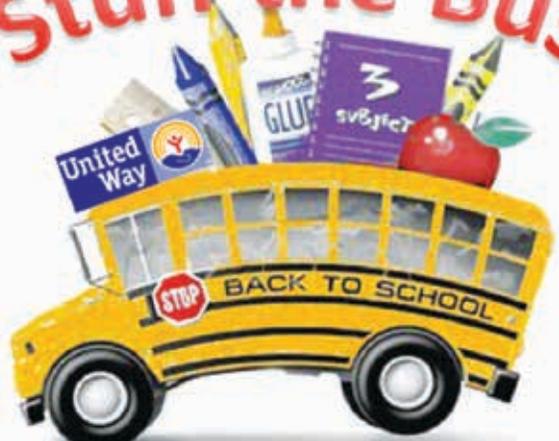


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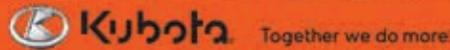
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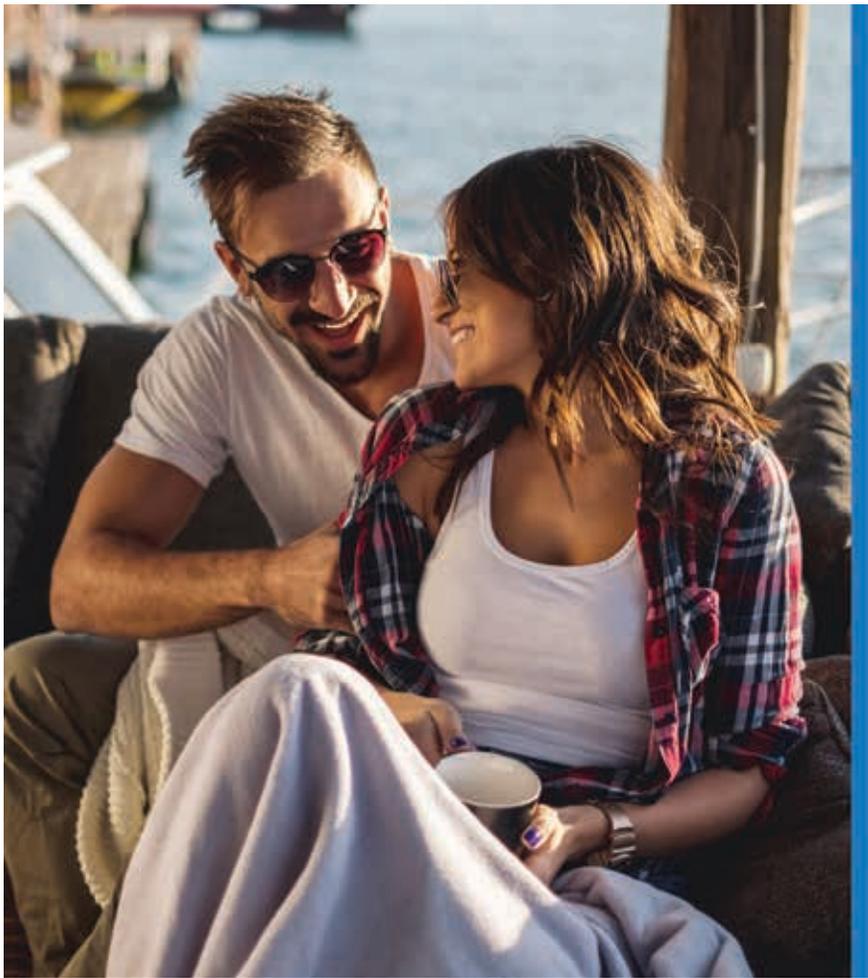
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