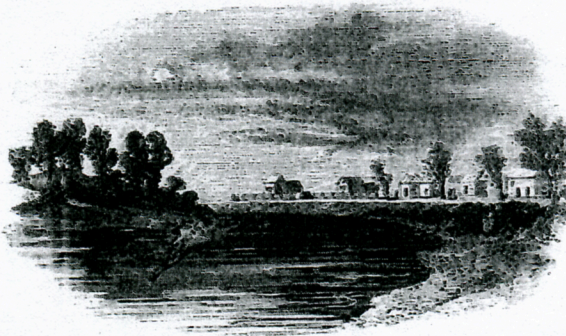


History Page

"La Queue de Loure"

Ottertail

HARPER'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.



Ottertailians love telling the story of how our village got its name. Long before there were roads in this area, the best method of travel was by water. Two of these water highways are the Leaf Lake chain, which drains south to the Gulf of Mexico, and Ottertail Lake, which drains north to Hudson Bay. Because of its strategic position, Native Americans and early explorers often held meetings on the shores of "La Queue de Loure," so named because of the long sand bar separating the lake from the river, which looked like - and still looks like (Two centuries later) - an otter's tail. In the Mid-1800's Donald McDonald started a trading post on the east shore of Lake Ottertail, which he called Ottertail City.

In the winter, we are a community of 313 residents. When summer arrives, however, Ottertail City swells to over a 1000. Located on Minnesota highways 108 and 78, we are nestled among hundreds of streams and lakes, the largest of which is our namesake, Otter Tail Lake. In addition, it is the name of our county, wherein Ottertail City is at the center. Although our base population increases in summer, it still doesn't reach levels attained in the 1870's when residents numbered 1200. During its hay day Ottertail had its own weekly newspaper, 5 hotels, 27 saloons and many other types of enterprises necessary for pioneer life.

Today, we are slowly but surely increasing in population and in number of businesses catering to both seasonal and year-round retail trade.

Harold, Allen & Sharon