

A TRIP TO OTTER TAIL CITY IN 1871—

Let us suppose we are taking a summer trip through Otter Tail County in 1871, and our stage coach has arrived in Otter Tail City. The coach stops at Stone's Hotel, but there are other hotels in which to spend our time. In order to learn a little about the stores and other business places of the community we pick up the Ottertail City Record and read the following advertisements. Perhaps we had better look over what the hotels have to offer before deciding whether we will remain at Stone's hotel.

MANY HOTELS

There is the Battle Lake House run by M. Shaw, and situated at the west end of Battle Lake at the junction of Ottertail City and Brandon Stage Routes. (We could stop there tomorrow if we change our mind about staying on here at Ottertail City). Battle Lake House is also on the direct road from Ottertail City to Morris which is on the main line of the St. Paul & Pacific Railway. The owner has just completed extensive improvements and additions and is "now prepared to entertain travellers in good style, with plenty of good stabling." He says his charge is moderate.

Ah, Thatcher Stone, proprietor of Stone's Hotel, where we are now located has an advertisement. He says: "This house is newly built and newly furnished and neither trouble nor expense have been spared in making its appointments perfect for the accommodation of travellers. Clean beds, comfortable rooms and a table constantly supplied with the very best the market affords. Arriving and departing hotel for the stage and Minnesota Stage Company. Good stabling attached. Charges reasonable.

THE ST. PAUL HOUSE

Next, St. Paul House, H. Houde, proprietor. (Editor's note in 1958: This house is still standing). "The proprietor of this house has just completed an extensive addition thereto and is now prepared to accommodate travelling public in a manner not to be surpassed, north or west of St. Paul. Good stabling, charges moderate."

PLENTY OF STABLE ROOM

Here is the City Hotel run by Wm. McArthur, Ottertail City. Boarding by the day or week and travellers kept on; the most reasonable terms. Plenty of good stable room with an abundance of hay and feed for the accommodation of teamsters and travelers."

In next column "Union Hotel, M. Anderson, proprietor at Ottertail City. Boarding by day or week at reasonable rates. Good stabling and plenty of hay for the accommodation of teams." M. Anderson also says in a second advertisement under his hotel notice: "I have also opened a Meat Market in which I intend to keep constantly on hand for the accommodation of the people of this community who wish to purchase a supply of fresh meat at reasonable prices."

We'll stay at Stone's as it is farther north along the shore of the beautiful Otter Tail which skirts the town on the west and south, and is more convenient to walk through the sandy loam streets to the general stores in the village. Ottertail is the first city the travellers have found thus far in Minnesota where it is more pleasant to walk after a rain than at any other time. Most towns are filled with deep mud puddles and deep rutted wheel tracks, the center of which are like a plowed field after the oxen have moved along with their heavy wagons. Not so firm after the rain and it is pleasant to be about in Ottertail City. The sandy ground is packed

AND THE STORES—

What stores does Ottertail City offer: The Ottertail City Record of 1871 lists in advertisements:

"Northwestern Store, E. G. Holmes, proprietor. While returning his sincere thanks to his numerous patrons for their many favors in the past, the undersigned would again inform them and the Balance of Mankind that he is still at the Old Stand where he is daily supplying his customers with every description of merchandise. Having connections with a number of Eastern Houses and having the advantage of their experienced buying I am now prepared to offer the people of the North West every classification of luxury and necessity and at unparalleled low prices. Mammoth Outfitting Depot. Dry Goods, Groceries, Boots and Shoes, Hats and Caps, Ready Made Clothes, Wine, Liquor and Cigars constantly on hand. Produce of all kinds taken in exchange and highest cash prices paid for wheat and oats. E. G. Holmes."

We note also that E. G. Holmes has another half a column ad for his Detroit Lakes Store in which he says: "I wish to inform the people of Becker and adjoining counties who are endeavoring to keep up with the Northern Pacific

unusual extensive and... DAILY... I am now prepared to offer... Otter Tail and adjoining counties great bargains in dry goods, groceries, boots and shoes, hats and caps, shelf hardware, crockery ware, wine and liquors, cigars, tobaccos. All of which together with all the other merchandise naturally to be found in a well equipped store will be constantly on hand. Having purchased the above in a favorable market I can afford to sell to my customers at Greatly Reduced Prices. Produce taken in exchange for merchandise. Call and see me at The Old Stand. C. M. Peake."

R. L. FRAZEE'S MILL—

Down near the end of the town, near where the river flows into the lake, is the Pioneer Mills, with R. L. Frazee, proprietor. His advertisement offers "Lumber of all kinds, both White and Norway pine. Lath and shingles, also a full stock of dimension stuff constantly on hand. Sawing done to order. Orders promptly executed. Grain taken in exchange for lumber. R. L. Frazee."

NEW STORE—

If we were setting up housekeeping we would be interested in the advertisement of the Ottertail Store, Englund & Johnson proprietors. "New Store, New Goods, New Prices. This firm having lately formed a co-partnership and at great expense erected and moved into one of the most extensive and commodious mercantile establishments that can be found in the North-West now offers to their old customers and the people of the upper country generally one of the most extensive, varied and thorough assortments of general merchandise that can be found in this or any other frontier locality and at such remarkably low prices that none can possibly go away dissatisfied. This immense stock in part consists of dry goods of every variety and style, groceries, provisions, boots and shoes, leather findings, aints and oils. In addition we have a stock of hardware, cook and heating stoves, iron and sash window glass, doors. We are daily expecting a nice stock of furniture from the Eastern Markets of the best material and manufacture. To the farmers we would say "Call and see our assortment of plows". Also in crockery ware, tin ware, glass ware, wooden ware and wares of all kinds."

DRUG STORE—

Then there is an advertisement of a Drug Store operated by J. H. Homes, who "respectfully informs the public of Ottertail City and vicinity that he has opened a drug store where he now has and will constantly keep on hand a full and complete assortment of fresh drugs, medicines, patent medicines, paints, oils, school books, toilet and fancy articles, stationery, nuts, candies; and 'prescriptions' will be carefully and accurately compounded. Store in Post Office building."

PHOTOGRAPH GALLERY—

Think of having your picture taken? W. T. Williams is advertising his photograph gallery, which is "prepared to take photographs in colors and in all kinds of weather with Rocky Mountain or Minnesota scenery backgrounds! He is also offering a supply of albums, lockets, frames and plain and fancy cases."

There are advertisements for Thomas Conroy's Black Smith who "informs the people of Ottertail City and vicinity that having obtained a supply of coal and iron he is now prepared to do all kinds of blacksmith and such manner as to give complete satisfaction. Horseshoeing is a specialty and done in a manner not to be surpassed. All work warranted and at fair prices."

SALOON ADVERTISEMENT—

John W. Bennet at Byrons Saloon still "continues to dispense creature comforts to the hungry, thirsty and weary," and the Ottertail City Brewery, operated by Jos. Barrett, advertises good beer by the keg, barrel or load."

WIG MAKER—

My lady is especially interested in the advertisement of Louis P. Franklin, Wig Maker and Ladies Hair Dresser of St. Paul, who offers a fine assortment of long braids, switches, curls, bandeau, on hand in his St. Paul Store, which may be had for moderate prices to those who wish to order; and R. Gordon, proprietor of straw and millinery goods will send out hats to anyone's fancy. Those in need of legal advice will find advertisements by the following "Councillors at Law"—W. F. Hall, Ottertail City; E. E. Corliss, Clitherall; G. W. Holland, Ottertail City; and J. H. Sanders will take care of any real estate or insurance matters.

The waves are pounding against the shore of Otter Tail Lake, the dogs are howling at the full moon, and it is time to turn out the kerosene lamp and go to bed. Thus we leave the traveler at Stone's Hotel.

M. G. L. R.