

Tour 6A

Devils Lake (city) -- Camp Grafton -- Devils Lake -- Fort Totten Indian Agency -- Sully's Hill National Game Preserve -- Devils Lake (city). ND 20, ND 57, and Indian Service roads.

Devils Lake to Devils Lake, 33 m.

Graveled roadbed.

No accommodations along route.

This circular route from the city of Devils Lake along the beautifully wooded southern shore of the lake passes the homes of the Sioux and Chippewa Indians near the Fort Totten Agency, and many points connected with Indian life and legend.

ND 20 branches S. from US 2 in DEVILS LAKE, **0.0 m.** (*see Tour 6*).

South of the city is level farming land, once the bed of a shallow glacial sea of which DEVILS LAKE, **5 m.**, is a remnant. The name is the white man's misinterpretation of the Sioux name Minnewaukan, *mystery*, or *spirit water*. Approximately 30 m. by 10 m., the lake is narrow and extremely irregular, with many little bays and peninsulas, and is surrounded by high morainic hills which, particularly along the southern shore, are heavily wooded. The clear water is strongly impregnated with sulphite, sodium carbonate, lime, magnesium, and iron--much like the water of oceans. It has been calculated that at the time of origin several thousand years ago the lake had a depth of 56 ft. A fall of 21 ft. is shown between that time and the Government land

survey of 1883, and a further fall of more than 26 ft. in the half century since. At the time of the survey fish were plentiful in the lake, and each spring in the early 1880's the settlers caught them with pitchforks and took them away by the wagonload. In 1888, for some reason never clearly explained, the fish disappeared from the lake, and by 1909 the water level had fallen so far that commercial shipping on the lake was discontinued (*see Tour 6*). The sudden recession of the lake is attributed to the lack of ground and surface water in North Dakota, and has constituted a strong argument for the proposed Missouri River diversion project which would store water from the Missouri and divert it for use in the eastern part of this State and South Dakota, and in western Minnesota.

Many legends concerning Devils Lake have been handed down by the Indians. One tells of two Indian braves who were talking and smoking on the shore, when one of them idly thrust his knife into a large log lying on the water's edge. The log slid into the lake, and the men saw that it was a huge sea monster. Some say this serpent still lives in a hole in the bottom of the lake, and can be seen at times; that the water rises and boils when he comes out of his lair; that he leaves the lake at night to sleep on the shore.

Another story relates how a victorious party of Sioux warriors, who had attacked the Chippewa against the advice of Owanda the Seer, were swallowed up by the lake as they returned across its surface from the battle.

Phantom ships are the subject of a number of stories told by both white people and Indians.

Under proper atmospheric conditions the waters of the lake throw off a vapor through which birds swimming on the surface can be seen from a distance highly magnified and resembling ships moving on the lake.

At **5 m.** is a junction with a graveled road.

Right on this road is LAKEWOOD PARK (*cottages can be rented; due to low water level, lake unsuitable for bathing here (1938); band concerts, dancing, baseball, and boating*), **1 m.**, (1,460 alt., 200 pop.), on an attractive arm of the lake known as Creel's Bay. The settlement grew up about a Chautauqua movement which was inaugurated in 1892, continued for more than 35 years, and became the third largest in the country (1911). During Chautauqua season in the early days steamboats, including the *Minnie H* (*see Tour 6*), made daily excursions to points of interest on the lake. The Chautauqua association had its own railway from the park to Devils Lake, and on some occasions special trains were run on all lines leading into the city. The point is still a popular summer resort.

At **6 m.**, at the "Narrows" of the lake, which is now only about 400 ft. wide, is a junction with a graveled road.

Right on this road to CAMP GRAFTON, **2.5 m.**, where field training of the North Dakota National Guard has been conducted annually since 1904. Named for Lt. Col. Gilbert C. Grafton, who died in the World War, the camp covers about 6 of the 180 sq. m. that once

composed the Fort Totten military reserve. Two-week maneuvers are held in June, usually early in the month, with 21 units, totaling approximately 1,100 troops, participating. The high light of the training events is Governor's Day, the second Sunday of the period, when the camp is put on dress parade for inspection by the chief executive of the State, who is commander in chief of its armed forces.

At **6.5 m.** on ND 20 is a junction with ND 57, now the tour route.

Left on ND 20 to the junction with a graveled county road, **10 m.**; R. here is TOKIO, **10.8 m.** (1,501 alt., 112 pop.), near the center of the original Fort Totten Indian Reservation.

Right from Tokio **1.5 m.** on a county dirt road to the DEVIL'S HEART, highest point in the Devils Lake area. For the Sioux it was a traditional meeting place to discuss war, hunting, or other ventures, and their name for it, in translation, means *center of the region*. Any promise made by an Indian on this hill is said to be sacred, and must be conscientiously fulfilled. Father J.B. Genin, one of the earliest missionaries to the Indians of this region, erected a cross on the crest of the hill March 4, 1868, and at the same time announced that Devils Lake was to be known as St. Michael's Lake, but the change was never popularly adopted, and lake and town still bear the ancient mystic Indian name. From the top of Devil's Heart there is an excellent panorama of the entire lake region.

South from Tokio on the county graveled road to a junction at **11 m.**; R. to **12.3 m.**; L. to WOOD

LAKE (*tourist and camping facilities; boating, fishing supplies*), **13.3 m.**, a small wooded body of water. Fishing is good during open season (*May 15-Nov. 1 for perch, June 5-Nov. 1 for crappie*). In June and July a boys camp is operated here by the Devils Lake Boy Scouts. On the northwestern shore is the BENSON COUNTY PARK (*picnicking and camping*), a 40-acre tract improved under the Works Progress Administration in 1937.

Between its junction with ND 20 and Fort Totten, ND 57 winds along the lake shore at the foot of the high, tree-clad range, and is known as the Burtness Scenic Highway, in honor of O.B. Burtness of Grand Forks (1884-), who as a Congressman from North Dakota (1921-27) was influential in obtaining funds for construction of the road.

At **11.3 m.** on ND 57 is a junction with a trail.

Left on this trail to the SKI SLIDE, **0.5 m.**, of the Lake Region Ski Club. Each year (*Feb.*) riders from all parts of the United States participate in the tournament held here.

At **13.3 m.** is a MONUMENT TO FATHER JEROME HUNT, who served St. Michael's Mission (*see below*) almost 40 years. With the help of a young Indian, Ignatius Court, whom he sent to the office of the Devils Lake *News* to learn the art of printing, he published a small newspaper, two prayer books, and Bible stories, all in the Siouan language.

FORT TOTTEN, **14 m.** (1,470 alt., 1,250 pop., including town and reservation), with its uniform

white agency buildings primly facing a central square, was originally a military post established in 1867 as a step in the plan to place the Indians of the region on a reservation. The reservation, named for Gen. Gilbert Totten, then Chief, Engineer Corps, U.S. Army, was established through a treaty in 1867 with the Sisseton, Wahpeton, and Cut-Head Sioux. On July 17, 1867, Gen. A.H. Terry, commander of the Department of Dakota, arrived on the southern shore of Devils Lake with three companies of the Thirty-First U.S. Infantry, to establish the post. The original fort was of logs, and still stands half a mile S. of the brick buildings that replaced it in 1868. The bricks for the fort were made on the reservation, and, with the exception of present Fort Lincoln (*see Tour 8*), built much later, this is considered the best-built fort in the history of North Dakota.

Principally used as troops' winter quarters, the post sometimes had as many as five companies and at other times only one. Fort Totten troops acted as escorts for surveyors of the N.P. Ry. and for the International Boundary Line Commission, and participated in various campaigns in Dakota and Montana, returning to the fort for the winter.

Although the Indians of the region were usually quite peaceable, there was occasional trouble with them, particularly on the route to Fort Stevenson along the Missouri (*see Tour 10*). This trail constituted the main channel of transportation and communication for Fort Totten in its early days. An anonymous poem describes what is said to have been an actual occurrence (although the date given is not correct) in which Josh Murphy and Charlie Reynolds--General Custer's scout on the Black Hills expedition, who died with Custer at the Little Big Horn (*see HISTORY*)--are carrying the mail into Fort Totten.

"It was in the spring of sixty-four,
Just a little while ere the war was o'er,
That 'twas mine the mail bags to transport
From Stevenson Pass to Totten fort;
Through the rugged passes the route to take
O'er the mountains that frown on Devils Lake;
Those canyons alive with skulking crews
Of the Chippewas and the savage Sioux;
But my heart felt light and my arm felt strong
For brave Josh Murphy rode along."

Josh is shot by Indians and begs his companion to prevent them from taking his scalp. Charlie lifts the dying man to his saddle and Josh's pony dashes into the night.

"We sought for Josh and we struck his trail
In the dew damp notes of the scattered mail;
And we found him at last, scarce a pistol shot
From the picket wall of the fort he sought.
There he proudly lay with his unscalped head
On the throbless breast of his pony—dead!
And the route from the pass to the cedared hill

Is known as the 'Deadman's Journey' still."

The garrison was withdrawn from Fort Totten in 1890, and the mission school, which had been conducted by the Grey Nuns of Montreal since 1874, was consolidated with the Indian Industrial School and housed with the agency offices in the fort buildings. Approximately 1,000 Sioux and a small number of Chippewa--many of both tribes are now of mixed blood--are under jurisdiction of the agency. At the school here the boys are taught dairying, gardening, carpentry, shoe repairing, steam and electrical engineering, baking, and tailoring; and the girls, sewing, laundering, cooking, and housekeeping.

At the auditorium (*last wk. Feb.*) is held the annual Midwinter Fair. Another annual fair is held (*1st wk. Sept.*) on the fairgrounds adjoining the agency on the NW. To both of these a few Indians bring handicraft work for sale; elsewhere such work is scarce, though beadwork and certain primitive musical instruments--flutes of red cedar, whistles of bone, large drums, tom-toms, rattles, and string bells--can be obtained at some of the homes.

The reservation, with its wooded hills and ravines, and its numerous lakes, is a beautiful region. Originally covering 360 sq. m., it has been reduced to 137,000 acres. The land is allotted in 60-acre tracts to a family, and some farming is done. The economic status of the Indians here is poor, however.

At Fort Totten is the junction (L) with a graveled Indian Service road, from this point the tour

route.

Right from Fort Totten on ND 57 to the INDIAN RESETTLEMENT TRACT (R), **0.5 m.**, where the Government has constructed 13 new homes for the Indians.

At **2 m.** on ND 57 are the DEVIL'S EARS, two long hills through which the highway runs. A man passing between these hills loses his mind, according to Indian legend, but regains it as soon as he comes out of the valley. The Indians are reluctant to discuss these hills with strangers; for while their pre-Christian philosophy included no devils, the hills were believed to have some connection with the Great Mystery or Great Spirit.

On the graveled Indian Service road is the 800-acre SULLY'S HILL NATIONAL GAME PRESERVE, **15.5 m.** (*no admission charge; picnic shelters, playgrounds, pure water, camping facilities; vehicles not allowed within fenced area*). Trees and shrubs cover the hills of the park almost to their peaks, and tiny lakes dot the valleys, making this a beautiful spot. The park and its highest point, Sully's Hill, are named for Gen. Alfred H. Sully, to commemorate his Indian expeditions into North Dakota. A high woven-wire fence encloses small herds of buffalo, elk, and deer, also wild fowl. Some of the animals are quite tame, and amuse visitors with their antics. More than 14,000 people visited the park in 1935.

The DEVIL'S TOOTH (L), **17 m.**, a boulder about 6 ft. high and 5 ft. square at the base, resembles a tooth with its roots extending upward. This rock is greatly revered by the Indians,

who tell that an Indian mother wandered over the hill one day carrying her child, and disappeared. Searchers, looking for her in vain, found this large stone, which had not been here before, and concluded it was the spirit of the woman and child. The stone has since had a reputation of connection with evil spirits. Gifts are often left here by Indians when a relative has died, but it is said that other Indians sometimes appropriate these offerings. It is an old custom for an Indian to give away part or even all of his possessions after the death of a loved one.

At **19 m.** L. on a graveled Indian Service road.

At **21 m.** (R) is small, attractive COURT LAKE (*charge of 10c per day or 25c per wk. for use of bathing beach*), named for Ignatius Court, the Indian who helped Father Hunt print a Siouan newspaper in the early days of St. Michael's Mission, and who served for many years as official interpreter at the Fort Totten Agency.

At **21.8 m.** is a junction with a graveled Indian Service road (L), now the route.

Right on this road is ST. MICHAEL, **2 m.** (1,470 alt., 180 pop.), at the foot of Mission Hill, which affords a good view of the surrounding country. Here is ST. MICHAEL'S MISSION, established in 1874 by the Grey Nuns order of the Roman Catholic Church, through the efforts of Maj. William H. Forbes, first Indian agent on the reservation. At the mission lived and worked Father Jerome Hunt (*see above*). The old mission church is still standing.

Left from the St. Michael junction to ND 57 at **22.5 m.**; R. here to Devils Lake,
33 m.