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North Dakota: A Guide to the Northern Prairie State

 By Federal Writers' Project

Junction US 10 - Cooperstown - Junction US 2 ND 1 & 7

Junction with US 10 to junction with US 2, 93 miles

Northern Pacific Railroad branch line roughly parallels route between US 10 and Binford.

Graveled roadbed throughout

Usual tourist accommodations in principal towns

This route proceeds north over the smooth plain of the fertile black-earth belt and goes through the hills of the upper Sheyenne River basin. First the Indians and later the Métis or half-breeds hunted the large herds of buffalo that once roamed this lake-dotted region. Among the earliest white comers here were the Nicollet-Fremont exploratory expedition in the 1830's, the Stevens survey party in 1853, the Sibley expedition in 1863, and in the 1870's, the soldiers, scouts, and wagon trains following the Fort Totten-Fort Abercrombie trail.

Bonanza farms flourished in this region during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, but were subdivided eventually into smaller farms taken up by Scandinavian immigrants who began to come here in the 1880's. The first Norwegian community in North Dakota was established near this route, and the fine farms of the present-day Norse residents are visible from the highway.

ND 1 branches north from its junction with I-94, 5 miles west of Valley City.

DAZEY, 22.5 miles (1,428 altitude 251 population), was named for the father of Charles T. Dazey, author of the play *in Old Kentucky*. The elder Dazey owned the town site.

Go right from Dazey on ND 26, a graveled highway, to Camp Corning Historic Site, 8 miles, where Sibley's expedition spent the night of July 16, 1863. The camp was named for an officer on the Sibley staff.

WALUM, 27.5 miles (1429 altitude 60 population), was named in 1900 for a prosperous landowner of this vicinity.

HANNAFORD, 31 miles (1,416 altitude 351 population), named for J. M. Hannaford, one-time vice president of the Northern Pacific Railroad., lies west of Bald Hill Creek, tributary of the Sheyenne River.

At 33 miles is the junction with a dirt road.

Right here 2 miles to the junction with another dirt road; R. here to CAMP POPE, 2.3 miles, made by members of the Sibley expedition in August 1863 on their return to Minnesota after driving the Sioux W. of the Missouri River.

At 36 in. the route crosses both the Sibley and the Fort Totten - Fort Abercrombie trails, although no traces of these routes are visible from the highway. The Sibley expedition, in pursuit of the Sioux believed to be responsible for the Minnesota Massacre, had learned that the Indians were encamped near Devils Lake, so the long column of 4,000 men, 1,350 mules, 800 horses, and 225 wagons set out in a northwesterly course toward the lake from Lisbon, Before they arrived, however, they learned that their quarry had gone to the Missouri, so they changed their course to the W. The Sibley route toward Devils Lake was followed by the heavy traffic between Fort Totten and Fort Abercrombie in the next decade,

At 41.5 miles is the junction with ND 7, a graveled highway.

Right here is COOPERSTOWN, 1 mile (1,425 altitude, 1,053 population). It was founded in 1882 by T.J. and Rollin C. Cooper, brothers who, flush with the profits of successful mining ventures in Colorado, arrived in this vicinity in 1880, and became bonanza farmers. They were instrumental in building the Sanborn, Cooperstown & Turtle Mountain Railroad (later a Northern Pacific Railway branch) into the town in 1883, and as terminal of this road Cooperstown grew rapidly.

 Although old-fashioned, rambling houses set in spacious lawns and numerous old buildings fronting the business streets create an unhurried atmosphere, Cooperstown has contributed several progressives to the national picture. Gerald P. Nye (1892- ), U. S. Senator from North Dakota, chairman (1936) of the committee for investigation of the munitions industry, was a weekly newspaper editor here when he was appointed to a vacancy in the Senate in. 1925. Former Congressman James H. Sinclair (1871- ), member of the Agricultural Committee (1925-1935), and coauthor of the Norris-Sinclair farm relief bill, was superintendent of the Cooperstown schools (1896-1898), and register of deeds (1899-1905). Thomas R. Amlie (1897- ), Wisconsin Congressman, and Edward D. Stair (1859- ), publisher of the Detroit (Mich.) Free Press, are also former residents.

Stair established Cooperstown's first paper, the Courier, the year the town was founded, and even before coming here had a hand in its history. He was feature writer for the Fargo Argus and was also working as a mail clerk on a railroad terminating in Hope at the time that Cooperstown, then only a small settlement, decided to contest Hope's right to the county seat. Stair learned that Hope was colonizing voters with an eye to the coming county seat election, and exposed the plan in a series of stories in the Argus, Hope residents were enraged, and warned bin; if he wished to keep his skin unpunctured, to stay out of town, which was extremely difficult in view of the fact that his train made a lay-over of several hours there. His fellow mail clerk, a six-foot newspaper man, came to his support, and the two, with six shooters dangling from their hips, sauntered about Hope unmolested but hungry, for the only hotel in town refused to sell food to the enemy. Cooperstown won the election, but Hope refused to con cede victory, and it required two raids by Cooperstown residents to obtain the county records for the new county seat.

On the Griggs County Courthouse grounds stands the OPHEIM LOG CABIN, the first permanent white home in the county. Built in 1879 by Omund Nets Opheim on his claim NE of Cooperstown, it was moved to its present site to become a pioneer memorial, and contains the hand-made furniture used by its former occupants.

East from Cooperstown on ND 7 to the junction with a dirt road, 3 miles, right here to another junction, 7 miles; right on a prairie trail to a circular group of five conical mounds, 7.5 miles. From excavations made in similar mounds along the lower Sheyenne River archeologists believe that most of these tumuli were built for burial purposes.

ND 1 and 7 are identical between 41.5 miles and 49.5 miles, where ND 1 proceeds right to enter the rounded, lake-dotted hills of the DOVRE MORAINE, seventh ridge formed by debris deposited during the halts of the retreating glaciers. The Nicollet-Fremont and Stevens expeditions, the Sibley column, and both a gold seekers' caravan and an immigrant train guided by Capt. James Fisk crossed this moraine at various times, camping on some of the lakes.

At 55 miles is the junction with a prairie trail. At this junction is (R) CAMP ATCHISON HISTORIC SITE, commemorating establishment of Sibley's base camp July 18, 1863.

Left on the prairie trail to LAKE SIBLEY, 0.5 miles, a small morainic lake on the northeastern shore of which is the actual SITE OF CAMP ATCHISON". The camp was named for Capt, Charles Atchison of Sibley's staff. When General Sibley heard from friendly Chippewa Indians that the Sioux he was pursuing were fleeing from the Devils Lake region toward the Missouri River, he hastily ordered trenches dug and breastworks thrown up, and inside this fortification placed all his sick men, weak horses, the baggage train, the cattle, and the surplus of supply wagons. Leaving two companies of infantry to maintain the camp he started after the Sioux. The main column, traveling light, succeeded in driving them across the Missouri near Bismarck, and returned to the base camp a month later. On a hill overlooking the lake from the NE. a marble marker denotes the grave of a private who died here.

At 57 miles is the junction with an unimproved dirt road.

Right here to LAKE JESSIE, 2.3 miles, where the bed of a once mirror-like body of water now blows with alkali dust. In the early 1900's 12 ft. of water covered the lake bed, but in 1933 motorcycle races were run here. A heavy growth of timber, which has survived the lake, and a fine spring at its west end made it a landmark for explorers of the region. Nicollet and Fremont camped here in 1839, and Fremont named the lake for his fiancée, Jessie Benton. In 1853 Gov. I. I. Stevens, guided by Pierre Bottineau, camped on the lake on his way to become Governor of Washington Territory. In 1862 Capt. James Fisk, guiding a party of gold seekers to the fields in Montana and Utah, camped on Lake Jessie, and again in 1863 stopped at the lake several days with an immigrant train he led through the State. The second Fisk expedition and the Sibley column, on Lake Sibley, were but a few miles apart, and the two

BINFORD, 57.5 miles (1,518 alt, 317 population), was named for Ray Binford, attorney for the D. B. S. Johnston Land Co., which purchased and platted the town site. The company bought the homestead of Gilbert Gilbertson, an early settler. The many names used by Gilbertson illustrate the common Norwegian practice of changing the surname on arrival in this country, sometimes using the name of the father with "son" affixed, and sometimes adopting the title of the home district as surname. To add to this, Americans thought these names too long or foreign to be practical, and changed them for the newcomers. Gilbertson filed on his homestead as Gilbert Gilbertson, but was equally well known in his community as Gabriel Gabrielson, Gilbert Gabrielson, and Gabriel Gilbertson.

Left (NW) from Binford on a graveled road is MOSE, 6 miles (1,539 altitude, 30 population). Here are the Ansonia KENNELS, which raise white German shepherds. This is a remnant of an industry that reached its peak in Griggs County in 1924 when the Nation-wide fad for German police dogs was at its height, In that year as many as 400 farmers were breeding dogs in the county, and animals totaling a value of more than $100,000 were shipped to all parts of the United States, to South America, and to the Philippine Islands. The industry had its beginning in 1914 near Cooperstown when farmer Torkel Njaa imported a German shepherd for a watchdog. Njaa was so pleased with the animal that he imported two females. His success in raising and marketing dogs caught the fancy of other farmers, and led to the establishment of the industry.

At 63.5 m, is the junction with a graveled spur.

Left here to RED WILLOW LAKE, 2 miles On the southern shore is a tourist park (cabins, boats, swimming, camping, fishing), part of a 1,300-acre State game refuge. A pavilion (seating capacity 1,500) serves for recreational purposes and is the scene of many conventions, including an annual Lutheran Bible Camp (June).

ND 1 crosses the wooded SHEYENNE RIVER at 69.5 in. and at 82,5 miles skirts the eastern end of STUMP LAKE, a body of water that once covered approximately 10,000 acres, but is now reduced to slightly more than 2,000. The Sioux called the lake Wamkduska (serpent), and believed it was once a great forest which the Great Spirit, in anger, allowed to be swallowed by water. On clear days logs can be seen below the surface, and where the water has re ceded many large stumps protrude from the ground, giving the lake bed the appearance of a timbered area logged off by beavers. Geologists believe that Stump Lake was once connected with Devils Lake, 10 miles W., and had an outlet into the Sheyenne River. The wooded area along the eastern shore has been transformed into a recreational park, and BIRD ISLAND, a 350-acre peninsula in the southwestern bay of the lake, has been set aside as a U. S. Biological Survey game reserve.

At 87 miles is the junction with a graveled road.

Left on this road to the junction with an unimproved road at 2 miles; R. here to WAMDUSKA HOTEL, 2 5 In., a lonely 75-room building that is a silent reminder of the village of Wamduska, platted, peopled, and abandoned because of a railroad survey. The town was founded in the 1880's when it was believed that the G, N, Ry. would be constructed along Lake Wamduska, as it was then called, but the survey was made 10 miles to the North and Warmduska died. Today the old hotel is used as a farm storehouse.

At 93 miles is the junction with US 2, 1 mile east of Lakota.