

## LAKE COUNTY

This county, established March 1, 1856, received its name from its being bounded on the southeast by Lake Superior, which the Ojibways call "Kitchigumi, meaning great water," as spelled by Gilfillan, or "Gitche Gumee, the Big-Sea-Water," of Longfellow in "The Song of Hiawatha." Its very early French name, Lac Supérieur, used by Marquette, Hennepin, and Franquelin, denotes its situation as the highest in the series of five great lakes tributary to the St. Lawrence river, which are named collectively the Laurentian lakes. This largest body of fresh water in the world has a mean level 602 feet above the sea, and a maximum depth of 1,026 feet.

### TOWNSHIPS AND VILLAGES.

Information of origins and meanings of the geographic names was gathered from John P. Paulson, county auditor, and A. E. Holliday, assistant superintendent of the Duluth and Iron Range railroad, each being interviewed during a visit at Two Harbors, the county seat, in August, 1916.

ALGER, a railroad station and junction, nine miles north of Two Harbors, was named for Hon. Russell A. Alger, senior member of a lumbering firm in Saginaw, Mich., formerly owning much pine timber in this county and large sawmills in Duluth. He was born in Medina county, Ohio, February 27, 1836; served in the Union army during the civil war, and was breveted major general in 1865; was governor of Michigan, 1885-87; was secretary of war, 1897-9, and United States senator from Michigan, 1902-07; and died in Washington, D. C., January 24, 1907.

BEAVER BAY township, the first organized in this county, before 1885, received its name from Beaver Bay village, platted in 1856 by Thomas Clark, on the west side of the small bay bearing this name, where the Beaver river flows into Lake Superior. The Ojibway name of this bay is noted by Gilfillan and Verwyst alike, "Ga-gijikensikag, the place of little cedars." The village was the first county seat until 1888, when it was succeeded by Two Harbors.

BRITTON, a railroad junction eight miles northwest of Two Harbors, was named for a superintendent of logging in its vicinity.

CRAMER township, organized July 14, 1913, and its railway village, were named in honor of J. N. Cramer, a homesteader and later a merchant in the village, who removed to Pennsylvania.

CRYSTAL BAY township, organized April 26, 1904, received this name from a very little bay of Lake Superior, having such crystalline rocks as were formerly worked at two localities farther southwest on the lake

shore in this county to supply emery, a variety of corundum, used for grinding and polishing.

DRUMMOND, a railroad station twelve miles northwest of Two Harbors, was named for the owner of adjacent logging camps.

FALL LAKE township, organized April 4, 1899, comprising the northern quarter of this county, received its name from Fall lake, in the southwest part of the township area. The Ojibways apply the name Kawasachong to this lake, meaning mist or foam lake, referring to the mist and spray rising from rapids and falls of the Kawishiwi river, which descends about 70 feet in a short distance between Garden lake and Fall lake. This aboriginal name of the falls and lake, noted by Prof. N. H. Winchell (*Geology of Minnesota*, vol. IV, p. 408), is in origin and meaning like the French and English names of Rainy lake and river, and in form it is somewhat like Koochiching, their Cree and Ojibway name.

FINLAND, a railroad village in Crystal Bay township, was named for the native country of many of its settlers, including some whose parents came there from Sweden.

HIGGINS, a railroad station in Two Harbors township, was named for a former owner of an adjacent tract of pine timber.

HIGHLAND, a Duluth and Iron Range railroad station, is near the highest land crossed between Lake Superior and the Cloquet river.

KNIFE RIVER, a railroad village in the southwest corner of this county, incorporated October 2, 1909, is at the mouth of the river of this name, which is translated from Mokomani zibi of the Ojibways.

LARSMONT, a railroad station between Knife River and Two Harbors, was named for an adjoining settler, who is a farmer and fisherman.

LAX LAKE, a railroad station in Beaver Bay township, and its lake of this name, commemorate John Waxlax, a Swedish immigrant from Finland, whose homestead farm adjoined the lake.

LITTLE MARAIS, a small village port of Lake Superior, in Cramer township, was named by the early French voyageurs for its little marsh, in contrast with the larger marsh of Grand Marais, in Cook county.

SILVER CREEK township, organized May 3, 1905, received the name of a creek flowing into Lake Superior four miles northeast of Two Harbors, translated from the Ojibway name.

TWO HARBORS township, organized February 20, 1894, was named after the lake port of the Duluth and Iron Range railroad, bearing the same name, which was incorporated as a village March 9, 1888, and as a city February 26, 1907. The city lies on two little bays, natural harbors, named Agate and Burlington bays, the ore docks being on the western Agate bay. Beach sand and gravel here contains frequent pebbles of banded chalcedony, called agate.

WALDO township, organized August 3, 1909, took its name from an earlier Duluth and Iron Range railroad station. This is also the name of a county in Maine, and of villages and townships in nine other states.

## LAKES AND STREAMS.

Much aid for the following pages has been received from the descriptions and maps of the Minnesota Geological Survey, which in the fourth volume of its Final Report has a long chapter on Lake county and three other chapters on its parts of the Vermilion and Mesabi iron ranges.

The coast of Lake Superior in this county has the following islands, points, bays, and tributary streams bearing names, in their order from southwest to northeast: Knife island and Granite point, near the mouth of Knife river; Agate and Burlington bays, before mentioned, at Two Harbors; Burlington point, at the east side of the latter bay, which received its name from a townsite platted on its shore in 1856; Flood bay, named for a man who took a land claim there in the same year; Stewart river, where likewise in 1856 John Stewart and others took claims; Silver creek, which gave its name to a township; Encampment river, and an island of this name, about a mile and a half farther east, named in Norwood's geological report, as assistant with Owen, published in 1852; Gooseberry river, a name given on the map of Long's expedition in 1823, noted by Gilfillan as a translation of the Ojibway name; Split Rock river and point, named from the rock gorge of the stream near its mouth; Two Harbor bay (not to be confounded with the bays at the city of Two Harbors); Beaver river and bay, whence the village and township of Beaver Bay are named; the Great Palisades, turretlike rock cliffs, rising vertically 200 to 300 feet at the lake shore; Baptism river, named Baptist river on Long's map; Cathedral bay, bordered by rock towers and pinnacles; Crystal bay, source of the name of a township; an unnamed bay and point at Little Marais; Manitou river, retaining its Ojibway name, which means a spirit; and Pork bay, in notable contrast with the grandeur and awe of some of the preceding names.

Lakes tributary to Lake Superior include Stewart lake and Twin lakes, sources of Stewart river; Highland lake, close west of Highland station; Thomas, Christensen, Amberger, Clark, Kane, and Spruce lakes, mostly named for cruisers selecting tracts of timber, or for lumbermen in charge of logging camps; Bear lake, three miles northwest of Beaver Bay; Lax lake (formerly called Schaff's lake), for which a railroad station is named, as before noted; Nicado, Micmac, and Nipissiquit lakes, having aboriginal names; Moose, Nine Mile, and Echo lakes, outflowing south to Manitou river; Long lake, Shoepack, Crooked, Artlip, and East lakes; and, farther north, Harriet lake, Wilson lake and Little Wilson lake, Windy lake, Elbow, Lost, and Frear lakes, the last three being crossed by the east line of the county.

On the north, the basin of Rainy lake comprises about three fifths of Lake county. Its chief streams, sending their waters to the series of lakes on the international boundary, are Isabella river, Stony and Birch

rivers, and Kawishiwi river. The last is an Ojibway name, meaning, as defined by Gilfillan, "the river full of beavers' houses, or, according to some, muskrats' houses also."

The abundant lakes of this northern district include Bellissima or Island lake, Parent and Syenite lakes, Lake Isabella, Gull, Bald Eagle, and Gabbro lakes, the last being named from the rock formation of its shores; Copeland's lake, Clearwater, Pickerel and Friday lakes; Greenwood lake, named for George C. Greenwood, who was a hardware merchant in Duluth, often called West Greenwood lake, in distinction from a lake of this name in Cook county; Sand, Slate, Birch, White Iron, Farm, and Garden lakes, the last two noting that the Ojibways had cultivated ground adjoining them; Fall lake, called Kawasachong lake by the Ojibways, noticed on a preceding page for the township named from it; Boulder lake, Lake Polly, Lake Alice, and Wilder lake; Fraser and Thomas lakes, named for John Fraser and Maurice Thomas, who selected timber lands and engaged in lumbering near these lakes; Gabimichigama and Agamok lakes, each extending into Cook county; Ogishke Muncie lake, somewhat changed from its Ojibway name, meaning a kingfisher, spelled ogishkimanissi by Baraga's Dictionary; Cacaquabic or Kekequabic lake, translated by Gilfillan as "Hawk-iron lake;" Marble lake, Cherry, Currant, Doughnut, Spoon, Pickle, and Plum lakes; Lake Vira and Ima lake, the latter named in honor of the eldest daughter of Prof. N. H. Winchell, the state geologist; Illusion lake, Jordan, Alworth, Disappointment, and Round lakes; Ensign lake, named in honor of Josiah D. Ensign, of Duluth, judge in this district since 1889; Snowbank lake, a translation of its Ojibway name, which means, as Gilfillan defined it, "snow blown up in heaps lying about here and there;" Newfoundland lake, Moose, Jasper, Northwestern, and Crab lakes; Manomin lake, meaning wild rice; Wood or Wind lake, Pine, Sucker, Oak Point, and Saturday lakes; Triangle and Urn lakes, whose names were suggested by their outlines; Newton lake, named by Dr. Alexander Winchell in honor of his brother, Newton H. Winchell; and, near the northwest corner of the county, Horse lake and Jackfish lake.

Snowbank lake has Boot and Birch islands, the first being named for its shape; and a small lake between Ensign and Snowbank lakes is for a like reason named Boot lake.

During the examination of this region for the Minnesota Geological Survey, much care was taken to secure correctly the Ojibway names of the streams and lakes. Their translations were commonly used in that survey, as also by the earlier explorers and fur traders, government surveyors, and lumbermen. But nearly all the lakes of relatively small size lacked aboriginal names, and in many instances they yet are unnamed. The need for definite description and location of geologic observations led frequently to arbitrary adoption of names, where

none before existing could be ascertained. For example, Dr. Alexander Winchell in 1886 gave to six little lakes on the canoe route between Kekequabic and Ogishke Muncie lakes, occurring within that distance of less than two miles, the names of the first six letters of the Greek alphabet, the series being Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, Epsilon, and Zeta lakes. When farmers and other permanent settlers come, new names will doubtless replace some that have been thus used or proposed without local or historical significance.

The lakes on the north side of this county were surveyed and mapped, with full details of their shores and islands, by David Thompson in 1822-3, for determination of the course of the international boundary, following a canoe route that had been long used by the fur traders. An excellent description of this route, from Grand Portage to the Lake of the Woods, was published in 1801 by Sir Alexander Mackenzie in his "General History of the Fur Trade from Canada to the Northwest."

Cypress or Otter Track lake is the most eastern in this series bordering Lake county. Its first name, used by Thompson, refers to its plentiful cypress trees, now commonly called *arbor vitae* or white cedar. Otter Track is for the Ojibway name, noted by Gilfillan, "Nigig-bimikawed sagaiigun, the lake where the otter make tracks, from four tracks of an otter on the rocks by the side of the lake, as if he had jumped four times there." More probably, however, the name alludes to peculiar slides where otters took amusement by sliding into the water from a bank of snow or rock or mud, as described in Herrick's "Mammals of Minnesota" (pages 129-135).

Next westward is Knife lake, having several branches or arms, translated from *Mokomani sagaiigun* of the Ojibways. Prof. N. H. Winchell in 1880 wrote of their reason for this name, derived from an adjoining rock formation, "a blue-black, fine-grained siliceous rock, approaching flint in hardness and compactness, with conchoidal fracture and sharp edges; sometimes it is nearly black. It is this sharp-edged rock that gave name to Knife lake. It is only local, or in beds, or sometimes in ridges."

The outlet of Knife lake flows through three little lakes, which Dr. Alexander Winchell named in 1886, from east to west, Potato, Seed, and Melon lakes. Next are Carp lake (also called Pseudo-Messer lake) and Birch or Sucker lake, named for their fish and trees, succeeded westward by the large and much branched Basswood lake, on the northern limit of the geographic range of this tree, which is generally common throughout Minnesota and is very abundant in the Big Woods.

For the last of these lakes Mackenzie used the French name of the basswood, *Lac Bois Blanc* (white wood), adding, "but I think improperly so called, as the natives name it the Lake Pascau Minac, or Dry Berries." This Ojibway name was spelled *Bassimenan* by Prof. N. H.

Winchell, and Bassemenani by Gilfillan, whose translation of it is "Dried blueberry lake." Although the first syllable may have suggested the English name, Basswood, which is a translation from that given by the early French voyageurs, the Indians had no reference to the tree, but only to their gathering and drying berries here for winter use.

Adjoining the northwest part of Lake county, the river flowing from Basswood lake along the boundary enters Crooked lake, translated from its old French name, with reference to its very irregularly crooking and branching outlines.

#### HUNTER'S ISLAND.

Nicollet's map, published in 1843, shows a more northern route of canoe travel from Saganaga lake west to Lac la Croix, which follows the stream and series of lakes outflowing from Saganaga, whereas the international boundary crosses a water divide between Saganaga and Cypress or Otter Track lake, thence passing westward along a continuous stream and its lakes. The tract between that northern route of water-flow and the southern or boundary route, bordering the north side of Lake county, is named Hunter's Island by Nicollet's and later maps. It is estimated by Dr. U. S. Grant to have an area of about 800 square miles. (M. H. S. Collections, vol. VIII, 1898, pages 1-10.)

#### GREENWOOD MOUNTAIN AND OTHER HILLS.

This county is traversed from southwest to northeast by the continuations of the Vermilion and Mesabi iron ranges, belts of rock formations more fully noticed in the chapter for St. Louis county, where they contain vast deposits of iron ores. These belts are not marked by ridges or hills along large parts of their course, and they nowhere attain heights worthy to be called mountains.

The general highland rises about 1,000 feet above Lake Superior, or 1,600 feet above the sea, within eight or ten miles north from the lake shore. Onward this average height, much diversified by valleys, low ridges, and hills, reaches nearly to the international boundary, on which Otter Track and Crooked lakes are respectively 1,387 feet and 1,245 feet above the sea. Names have been given to only a few of the highest hills. Though these vary in their altitude to about 500 feet above the adjoining lowlands and lakes, they are unduly dignified by being called mountains and peaks.

Greenwood mountain is only 145 feet above the lake of this name at its north side.

Disappointment hill, a mile east of the lake so named, has a height of 350 feet above it.

Mallmann's peak, named for John Mallmann, employed by the Minnesota Geological Survey, situated close north of the east end of Kekequabic lake, rises steeply to the height of 230 feet.

About two miles southeast from the last are the Twin peaks, and nearly two miles farther east is Mount Northrop, named in honor of Cyrus Northrop, president of the University of Minnesota from 1884 to 1911, attaining altitudes about 2,000 feet above the sea, or 500 feet above Kekequabic lake.

#### SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST.

A great part of the north half of Lake county is included in this National Forest, which also comprises considerable areas in Cook and St. Louis counties. The date of its establishment, in 1909, and the steps taken by an act of Congress and by a special recommendation from Minnesota, leading to the designation of these lands as a public reservation for forestry uses, have been noted in the chapter for Cook county.

#### GLACIAL LAKE ELFTMAN.

When the continental ice-sheet of the Glacial period was finally melting away from this area, its northwardly receding border held temporarily an ice-dammed lake in the basin of Kawishiwi river, with outflow southward and westward. This ancient lake, first described by Arthur H. Elftman, an assistant of the Minnesota Geological Survey, was named in his honor by Prof. N. H. Winchell in the Bulletin of the Geological Society of America (vol. XII, 1901, page 125). "It had an area of about 100 square miles at the time of its greatest extent and an elevation of about 1,700 feet above the sea."