

I live on Turtle Mountain, straddling the international border, with nearly 1600 acres of pure beauty surrounding me. I'm Lake Metigoshe. Or, as the Americans say, Lake Metigosh-ee.

I'm the largest body of water on Turtle Mountain, but only about 60 acres of my lake is on the Canadian side. The rolling bush land surrounding me was settled by the Metis after 1908. Their hunting and trapping lifestyle suited the landscape of Turtle Mountain perfectly. European settlers considered this area undesirable as farming land. Little did they know what a recreational paradise I was going to be!

The farming settlers of Deloraine on the Manitoba side, and Bottineau on the North Dakota side, eventually did see the promise of a great recreational hotspot. But the Canadian side was to be developed only after the Americans took the lead. I was originally named 'Fish Lake' and then renamed 'Lake Farquhar'.

James Dawson, one of the earliest trapper-traders in the area, finally called me Metigoshe, from the Chippewa phrase 'Metigoshe washegum' which means, 'clear lake surrounded by oak trees' And oak trees I have! As well as six wooded islands ranging in size from a ½ acre to 27 acres.

Old James Dawson was the first to capitalize on my recreation qualities. As early as 1889 he offered boats for hire. Soon hotels were built to cater to vacationers, the first being Lakeview House, built in 1890 on the west side. It boasted 23 rooms and a sailboat, the May Queen. Half a dozen cottages were built around the hotel, with a large barn to keep guests' horses.

In 1899 Lake Central House Hotel was built on the east shore, surrounded by 65 acres of surveyed and plotted properties for summer homes. The hotel restaurant could seat 50, or the tables could be cleared to make room for an evening dance! A bath house was built on a nearby beach, and bathing suits were available for rent (believe it or not!).

The development of recreational activities on the Canadian side of the lake was nearly 20 years behind the Americans. In 1908, Deloraine merchant, Samuel Colquhoun, and Deloraine pharmacist, Charles Hasselfield, cleared the first campsites

north of the border, and soon more local folks joined them.



First Cottage built on Canadian side of Lake Metigoshe by

*M. S. Colquhoun in 1931*

In 1909 back on the south side, a long-distance telephone line was installed and the road from Bottineau was widened and graded. Stagecoaches, horse teams and automobiles passed daily along the road and the mail was delivered three times a week to my two post offices. Washegum Post Office on my west shore, and Metogosse Post office on my east. From there tourism boomed and many, many families enjoyed sunbathing on my beaches, fishing from my shoreline, and hiking through the woods that surround me.

Some folks got pretty creative. I remember back in the 1940's a fellow named Happy Armstrong, had a place on the American side where he would sell gas and minnows. He gave boat rides all over the lake. With a great big motorboat. Big enough for 10 to 12 people.

On the side of the boat he painted: 'Rides to Canada 25 cents'! Gas was clearly much cheaper back then!

*Adapted from a story in Vantage Points 3.*

*Vantage Points Flashbacks were written by David Neufeld with help from Betty Sawatzky. They were originally aired on CJRB Radio out of Boissevain, Manitoba in the early 2020s.*