

LILY POND PARK

10135 Kadler Avenue NE, Otsego, MN

TOWNSHIP OF OTSEGO

est. 1858

All of Otsego falls within an area of the state known as The Big Woods, a huge densely wooded eco-region originally 100 miles long and forty miles wide running diagonally from Minnesota to Wisconsin.

Settlers cleared much of it for farming in the early settlements during the 1850's and 1860's. Lily Pond was a transient hunting area for Native Americans. This area or townsite, Lily Pond (also called "Bedford"), was considered a close neighbor, but separate from Otsego townsite in the early days of settlers from Canada, New England and Europe in the 1850s. Both were in Otsego township, however.

Settlers mostly farmed and worked at the Ingersoll brick factory or the lumber industry seasonally. Some worked on the river as "River Pigs," where lumberjacks steered the logs from as far away as Aitken downriver by jumping from log to log and using tools designed to manage the flow. It was a very dangerous undertaking!

Prominent features of the area were the Lily Pond School (at the northwestern corner of Highway 39 and Kadler Avenue NE), the Lily Pond Methodist Episcopal church (directly across from the school) and the Baker Ferry crossing the Mississippi River at the end of Kadler Avenue, but slightly east of the current street.

Source: Otsego Heritage Preservation Commission



Going to the Ladies Aid in Otsego; 1916
Credit: Otsego Heritage Preservation Commission



Caleb and Emaline (Stevens) Baker, 1900, near site of Baker's Ferry that crossed Mississippi River.
Credit: Otsego Heritage Preservation Commission



Methodist Episcopal Church (first service 1906) before addition was built (foreground) and Dist. 10 (Lily Pond) School built 1870 before fire destroyed it in 1913. A larger stucco school was built which has been remodeled into a private home; about 1910; picture taken from the west.
Credit: Otsego Heritage Preservation Commission



Methodist Episcopal Church Sunday School Class; Easter 1906
Credit: Otsego Heritage Preservation Commission

