

Its entire length is about eight miles, but averages less than a quarter of a mile in width. A clear, rapid stream connects it with another lake of nearly equal size, known to the Indians as Sha-da-sag-i-e-gan, or Pelican Lake, and from thence discharges their superfluous waters into the Red Cedar, or Me-nom-in-ee River. A portage of only two miles in length connects Prairie Rice Lake with this river, and the foot of the portage, or the spot where it strikes the river, is twenty miles above its outlet into it. The lake being miry-bottomed, and shallow, is almost entirely covered with wild rice, and so thick and luxuriant does it grow, that the Indians are often obliged to cut passage ways through it for their bark canoes. From the manner in which they gather the rice, and the quantity which a family generally collects during the harvesting season, this lake alone would supply a body of two thousand Indians.

In the fall of 1850, when the writer passed through it, he found it occupied by fifty wigwams of the Ojibways, numbering over five hundred souls. They were busily employed in gathering the rice, camping separately in spots where it grew in the greatest thickness and abundance. The country surrounding the lake is sparsely covered with pine trees, through which fires appear to have occasionally run, burning the smaller trees and thickets, and giving the country a prairie-like appearance, which has given it the Indian name which it at present bears. One single island about four acres in size, and covered with a grove of beautiful elm trees, lies on the bosom of this picturesque lake. In times of danger, the Ojibway "rice makers" have often pitched their wigwams on it for greater security.

From the earliest period of their occupation of the Chipeway River country, the most fearless of the Ojibways came thither each fall of the year, to collect a portion of the abundant rice crop, notwithstanding its close vicinity