

## Welcome Back Ponies

The Ojibwe pony, also called the Lac La Croix pony, roamed North America for hundreds of years. These little horses, only five feet tall, used to wander freely in the forests around the Ojibwe villages. The dark-colored horses were an important part of the Ojibwe community.

In the early 1900s, there were several thousand horses in the Great Lakes region. They spent their summers in the fields. They spent their winters working with the Ojibwe people, hauling wood, pulling nets, and carrying ice blocks.

The ponies were adapted to the winter weather. They were muscular, with hard hooves, and small fuzzy ears. They had an extra nose flap to warm up cold air when they breathed. These traits allowed them to work hard for the Ojibwe all winter.

In addition to being good workers, the horses played a spiritual role for the Ojibwe. They had gentle personalities and loved being around people. They were treated like beloved family pets.

Sadly, in the early 1900s, the Ojibwe people and their ponies were targeted by the United States and Canadian governments. Thousands of ponies were exterminated. By 1977 there were only four Ojibwe ponies left. They were stranded on an island in Lac La Croix just over the Canadian border.

Word came to the Ojibwe that the Canadian government planned to kill these last few ponies. So the people decided to take action. They crossed the border, braved the ice waters, and lured the ponies with apples. It worked! They captured the remaining ponies and led them to safety on a farm in Minnesota.

For many years the ponies were carefully bred and managed. By the 1990s, there were enough ponies to attract the notice of a non-profit organization that

contributed resources to help grow the breeding program even more.

In 2017, forty years after the rescue of the breed, Ojibwe ponies returned to Lac La Croix First Nation. It was a day for celebration. People said that the ponies represented the spirit of resilience. It was like welcoming a family member home.

Which adaptation is not mentioned as one of the ways that the Ojibwe ponies survive the winter weather?

- A. Extra nose flap
- B. Small fuzzy
- C. Dark color
- D. Hard hooves

In which year were there only four Ojibwe ponies left?

- A. 1900
- B. 1977
- C. 1990
- D. 2017

Which of the following quotes from the passage is NOT evidence for the statement that the horses were an important part of the Ojibwe community?

- A. The horses played a spiritual role for the Ojibwe
- B. The people decided to take action
- C. They were treated like beloved family pets
- D. [The horses] used to wander freely in the forests

Why did the ponies represent resilience?

- A. Because they were small
- B. Because they were gentle
- C. Because they survived
- D. Because they were stolen

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