



Explore the Road to Itasca... and Beyond

BYWAY BUZZ

LAKE COUNTRY SCENIC BYWAY NEWSLETTER

January 2006

"Arago My Arago" -By Frank Mitchell-Byway Ambassador & Hubbard County Historian

Arago Township was organized on April 1, 1896. The two townships, now Arago and Clover, organized as one township. Hay Creek runs through Arago Township, so the area was known as Hay Creek and Hay Creek South.

Chas. Martin homesteaded the N.W. ¼ of section 8 in Twp. 141. In the local news in 1896 it was stated, "There is a move to establish a Post Office here". On November 19, 1897 the Arago Post Office was established, with Chas. Martin as postmaster. At first the post office was in his log home. After this the area was known as Arago and South Arago. Mr. Martin later added a livery stable, a store and the "Fairview Hotel" with a dining room.

About 1906 Henry Michel took over the post office and moved it to his property about ½ mile north. He built a 12 x 20 foot building on his property. This was used as the post office until it closed about 1909. The building is still standing in the same location on the hill next to the highway.

In the local news of July 23, 1908 the headlines read, "Arago Store Sold". Henry Michel sold ½ section of land to D.B. Short of Two Inlets. The sale included the post office, the store with stock of goods, and the residence. Mrs. Michel resigned as postmistress and Mrs. D.B. Short was appointed to take her place. Later Daisy Renhard, the Short's daughter, was postmistress until the post office closed.

June 14, 1906 "There is to be another store in Arago before many moons". This was possibly at Bill Pritchett's mill 1 mile north of the post office.

In 1922 a club was organized in South Arago, known as the "Jack Pine Farmers Club". In the spring of 1923 a 24x40 foot log clubhouse was built. The building was on property leased from Frank Beden on the SW ¼ of the SE ¼ section 27 in Township 141. There was a U.S. observation tower on the SE ¼ of section 21. Little is known about it except that it blew down in a windstorm in 1909. This was probably on the present Brumbaugh property.

A notice in the Hubbard County Clipper asked for sealed bids for the construction of a bridge across Hay Creek on section 9. Bids will be considered by the County commissioners on May 21, 1892 at 2 o'clock. This was for the 2nd bridge built across Hay Creek. On September 8, 1904 R. Esser was awarded the contract to build a new bridge across Hay Creek. On April 13, 1905 S.L. Massie, with a crew of men and horses are at work on the approach to the new bridge.

In 1938 state highway crews were busy surveying a new location of Highway 71 to cross Hay Creek about ¼ mile down stream, or east of the present bridge. This will eliminate the

sharp curves in the present road. On July 18, 1940 the headlines read "New Bridge Falls Down". The new bridge or box culvert collapsed and fell into the river. The culvert 8x10 ft. inside and 126 ft. long had just been finished and was being covered with 15 ft. of dirt when a large hole opened up and caused the culvert to collapse. This blocked the flow of water and caused several months delay in opening up the new highway. Traffic was detoured by way of Two Inlets. It was expected to cost the state \$15,000.00 to replace it. The accident was blamed on the highway engineers who made the original survey.

There were 3 schools in the township. The 1st one organized was district 15, in 1895. This schoolhouse was built on the Hemmerick property in the NE ¼ of section 18. The building was later moved to the SE ¼ of section 5 and is still being used for the town hall. The 2nd school was district 21, which was granted in 1896 when Mr. Judenitch petitioned the county commissioners for a district in South Arago. The school was built on the NE ¼ of the SE ¼ section 19. This building has been moved to the Pioneer Farmers Club grounds north of Itasca State Park, where it was refurbished and is open to the public during their shows. The 3rd school was on the Beden property near the Jack Pine Farmers building.

In 1917 a cemetery was surveyed and fenced in section 5. This is the Arago/Clover Evergreen Cemetery. This cemetery has been enlarged and is being used at the present time. A new sign was put up over the gate in 2003.

In 1892 the newspaper reported "The new wagon road recently laid out to Lake Itasca via Hay Creek will shorten the distance about 5 miles".

In the local news of June 23, 1909, "D.B. Short has his new hall nearly finished". Later in the news "Big Dance at Arago Hall July 3rd, come one, come all and bring your best girl".

Bill Pritchett had a sawmill on the little lake north of the post office. He had a sawmill, lath mill and a shingle all powered by separate steam engines. He also had a small store with gas pumps. I remember hearing the whistles from the steam engines at noon and at quitting time, even though we lived 3 ½ miles away. He dumped logs on the ice during the winter, and then floated them in in as he sawed them.

The following song was composed by Prof. Atkinson for the closing exercises.

There is a town that all should know
Arago my Arago
Where scented pines and clovers grow
Arago my Arago

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"Arago My Arago-(continued from Page 1) By Frank Mitchell-Byway Ambassador & Hubbard County Historian

Where stretch the shores of Island Lake
And rippling waves sweet music make,
We shout aloud to let you know
The beauties of our Arago.
In summer fields of waving grain
Arago my Arago
Adorn each hillside vale and plain
Arago my Arago
Beyond the forests may be seen
Dressed in their robes of living green
The stately trees rock to and fro
Where zephyrs breathe o're Arago.

Old winter smites with lusty blow,
Arago my Arago
And heaps with white and chilling snow,
Arago my Arago
But hardy folk may brave the storm,
For strenuous toil doth keep them warm,
Tall timber soon is lying low
Two harvests fall to Arago.
Our schoolhouse stands beside the road
Arago my Arago
Where wagons rattle with their load
Arago my Arago

But passing friends can never tell
How much with joy our young hearts
swell,
At Arago in public school.
Whene'er aboard we chance to go
Arago my Arago
Our thoughts will often to Thee flow
Arago my Arago
This sentiment we leave with you
Be ever faithful kind and true,
May happiness upon you flow
And heaven bless fair Arago.