

DEER LAKE HISTORY

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EARLY SETTLERS, AND SCHOOL IN THE MAIER SCHOOL DEER LAKE AREA

This bit of information about the early settlers, loggers, and resorters in the Deer Lake Community might help to preserve some history of Itasca County.

Just about the time or before homesteading started in Deer River Township, Mike Deering (father of Mrs. H.H. Parmeter-Rose Deering) and Angus Shaw (father of Mrs. Richard Metcalf-Ethel McNiven) came here from Duluth on a hunting trip. Mike Deering was one of the first ones to take notice and be especially impressed by the beautiful pine timber in this area. On his recommendation a group of settlers came to Deer River Township from Duluth and took homesteads in 1892-1893. Among these were Thomas Armstrong, Angus McNiven (foster father of Ethel McNiven), Dan McNiven, Hugh Mackay, Jane Welsh, Ed Nelson, Sam McElroy, Barney Gillon, John Deering and Stephen Hagan. One of the incidents which occurred in their homestead life was this . . . . .

Steve Hagan became discouraged and was leaving the country, and was met by Angus McNiven on the road near the county road and the M&K Railway Crossing, who persuaded him to turn back because Frank Voigt, Sr. had just brought in a car load of potatoes. They were spotted at the County Road Crossing and all the settlers could buy some spuds to plant. Steve "Be Hell" stayed and did well, made a fine home and farm of his homestead.

One of the early settler families that came, along with many others

in the 1890's was the Frank Voigt, Sr. family, that came from Marinette County Wisconsin to Itasca County in 1895.

Frank Voigt took a homestead on the West shore of Deer Lake (now the Carl Rudeen home). Here the family lived for five years. The need for a school was very evident. So some of the settlers Pat Maher, Steve Hagen, Alec Rose, Frank Voigt Sr. and others organized School District Number 5, and built the log school house which was called the Maher School. The First four teachers in the following order were: Miss Smiley, Mr. Jay Goodell, Miss Mary Warner and Miss Lowe.

Some of the early settlers not mentioned above, who were included in the Maher School Deer Lake area were these who came before 1895 and back to 1887, are August Chase, Tom Armstrong, John Larson, Louis Swanson, Magnus Edlund, Oscar Norman, Louis Samuelson, Eric Moberg, Andrew, John and Gust Hedquist, James Woolford, and William Buell. Those who came in 1895 to 1898 were the Metke family, Joe Johnson family, John Erickson family, H.H. Parneter, Sterling, George Evens, and Howland families. The settlers who lived on the shores of Deer Lake in 1900 or before were Andrew Hedquist, Archie Hallock, John Nelson, Louis Orge, Ed Wold, Jack Bosley, Mr. Foster ( a civil war veteran), and Frank Voigt, Sr. Shortly after 1900 came W.H. Clakk, Carl Rudeen, and W.E. White.

## EARLY LOGGING IN DEER LAKE VICINITY

Logging in the pine timber was quite extensive about 1896. The peak of logging in the Deer Lake area was from about 1894 to 1900. The Freeman and Grey Logging Company used oxen exclusively in their operations. They logged the area south of Deer Lake and North of Bass Lake in 1894 to 1897. Their logs were landed on the ice on Deer Lake and in the spring were floated down Deer River to the Mississippi and on down to the lumber mills in Minneapolis.

Frank Voigt Sr. was interested in the timber business. He bought the state pine timber on all of section 36 in Deer River township (T.57 R.27) being just across the town line from his homestead, which was in Deer Lake Township. This was a good chance to produce a large amount of logs with a small force or crew as his timber area extended to the *bank of Deer Lake on the east and to the Deer River* - bank on the west. He sold his logs landed on the lake and river (with provision for floating them down Deer River to the Mississippi) to C.A. Smith Lumber Company.

His crew consisted of about ten men with four horses. He logged this timber about 1,000,000 board feet in three years, 1896-1899.

Hurd and McAvity logged on a large scale on the east and north sides of Deer Lake from 1898 to 1901. They had three large camps, one on Crooked Lake near Deer Lake, one on Pughole Lake near where highway Number 38 is now located and one on Miller Lake near Orange Lake.

Hurd and McAvity used horses in their logging operations. Horses

were found to be more efficient than oxen because they were faster.

They had five sleigh logging roads running to Deer Lake over which they hauled their logs to be landed on the ice and later floated across Deer Lake down Deer River to the Mississippi and on down to Minneapolis.

#### EARLY SETTLERS AND SCHOOL IN THE FREESTONE SCHOOL DEER LAKE COMMUNITY

In 1900 Frank Voigt Sr. bought 187 acres of land on the east shore of Deer Lake (now the C.C. Baker summer home), where in 1900 was built the early day Voigt's Resort. There was no school in this locality so some of the settlers, Frank Voigt, Frank Freestone, Joe Long, Jake Wasson, in 1900 built a log school house which was called the Freestone School on land donated to School District Number One by Jake Wasson. This school was located about one mile from Deer Lake. The first teacher here was Miss Molly Pucket (Mrs. Frank Gran), next were Miss Jessie Hutchins (later Itasca County Superintendent of Schools), Miss Louise Rogers and Miss Emily LaFreniere (sister of A.L. LaFreniere, publisher of Itasca County Independent).

Mrs. George Booth was county superintendent of schools from about 1900 to 1910.

In 1903 the Severt Gazrds and Carl Larsons came to the Freestone School Community and later Clark, Cochran, Dethloffs and others came to help settle the commantiy.

About 1912 the old log school house was torn down and a frame house

was built about one mile south. It took the same name of the Free-stone School.

#### SOME OF THE EARLY RESORTS IN ITASCA COUNTY

Three of the very earliest summer resorts in Itasca County were Dave Cochran's on Big Wabana Lake, started about 1898; Irve Martin's Resort on Trout Lake shortly after 1900; and the Frank Voigt's Resort on Deer Lake in 1900.

Voigt's Resort was patronized by many Itasca County people and many outsiders. Some of the guests were Dan Gunn, W.J. and H.D. Powers, A.W. Sitz, Roy Bell, George, Ed, and Arthur Kremer, George Booth, Henry Hughes, E.C. Kiley, L.A. Whittimore, E.J. Luther, Emil Litchke, Dr. Dan Costello, *C.E. Kipps, G. W. Frazier, Fred King, E.A. Freeman, S. D. Dickhaut,* C.C. Kelly, Frank, Charles, and Earl King, L.W. Huntley, Dr. Thomas Russel, Andy Clair, E.J. McGowan, Morris O'Brien and Cyrus M. King.

All of these are names of people in Itasca County about 1900 and back to 1892, and there were many more who patronized these early resorts.

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