

Pentoga

In 1899 Herman Velguth secured a large tract of land from George Wakefield east of Chicagoan. He constructed a sawmill on the south shore of Lake Velguth (now Indian Lake) and the site, first called Frederich's Ruhe became known as Pentoga. Velguth sold his interests to Hood and Mahoney who dismantled the mill and moved the equipment some two and one-half miles further south to a site near the railroad and river. they also took the name of the original mill site.



The village grew rapidly following 1900 and was composed of several grocery stores, two saloons, a hotel and several homes. with a depletion of the surrounding forest, the mill fell idle and the community declined. a historic flashback-a reprint of a 1902 account-follows:

"Sabbath, March 10 was indeed a happy day for the people in the pleasant little town of Pentoga, Iron County, Michigan. For the first time since the creation the sweet sound of church bells wakened the echoes of the hills and valleys of that region of our state. Several years ago two young men of Christian faith took possession of a immense virgin forest round about Pentoga Lake.

The latter was so named because of a tribe of Indians who had the wigwams on the shore. There they dwelt from generation to generation till quite recently when the scourge of smallpox entered their wigwams and swept every member of the tribe away. The mounds which mark their resting places are still

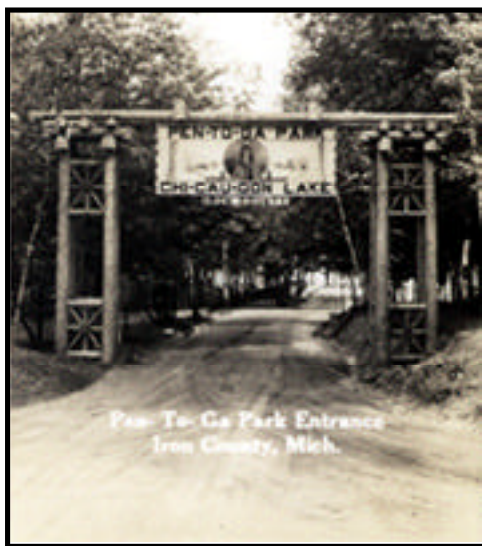


perfectly distinct, as each grave was covered with a bark like roof. Into this unbroken forest two young men, Francis Hood and Ralph Griswold, entered eight years ago. They cleared land sufficient to build a mill, ere dwellings, stores, hotel and school, and began the manufacture of lumber staves and lath. From the first it was the ambition to make the community which they had founded a God-featuring one. they soon had a Sunday school, he had song services in the hotel, invited ministers and other Christian men to deliver address as opportunity offered. The people took kindly to these efforts for higher things. The rough lumbermen with their woolen shirts and with every variety of faith, found a bound of social union in these services. As yet there was no church building and no paster sanctuary must be erected. They entered upon it with a great good will. Quite recently it was finished at a cost of \$2,500. On March 10 beneath cloudless skies and in the presence of great congregations completely filling the auditorium both morning and evening, with most attentive listeners and excellent service pf song the sacturary was dedicated to God. The people had paid for the church before they had entered it. The pulpit was not therefore turned in an auction block; but the people gave \$50 in the general collection. It was delightful to see the young men above mentioned act as bell-ringers, ushers and deacons and their wives leading in the serving of free lunch to the visitors, for of whom had driven twelve miles to share in the sacred privileges of the day. The community now

has not only a beautiful church, but a good and most acceptable pastor. As yet there is no organization. Application will be made for it to the Presbytery of Lake Superior at the spring meeting. Of course these people will be received into the fellowship of the church militant, and we all will rejoice that another jewel is added to the crown of our King.

-A.F.B.

(The pastor was Rev. Calgget. The church was destroyed by fire)



Entrance to Pentoga Park