

## Arkansaw Creek's History

If it hadn't been for Arkansaw Creek, who knows if there would even be an Arkansaw and if it would have the name it does today. One day in 1852, William F. Holbrook took a day off from his job at the Carson-Eaton Sawmill in Eau Galle, to go trout fishing with a friend. From Eau Galle, they went over the present day Gap Hill to a small nameless stream to fish. The Creek's winding course reminded him of the Arkansas River, so that's why he named the stream Arkansaw Creek.



Holbrook loved what he saw both in the area scenery and the creek's potential to generate water power. He envisioned building a mill on the creek. Two years later he returned with George, his brother, to build his sawmill that later led to the development of the community of Arkansaw.



Thus the creek was important in the naming of Arkansaw. As Arkansaw blossomed there were three dams constructed on the creek within a mile of each other. All of these dams were wiped out, however, during the Flood of 1907. The loss of these dams was difficult for the community as well as creating a financial loss to the owners of the dams. During this flood, large trees floated downstream against the dam, washing out the bridge and anything in the path of the water was sweep away.

The upper dam was built by Abel Parker in 1870. It was located south of the junction of what today is Highway 10 and County X. This dam was used exclusively for sawing lumber. The sawmill operated all summer and part of the winter and sawed 3000 or more board feet of lumber a day.

The middle dam was built in 1857 by Henry Miles and Lowell Edwin Curtis. This dam was used to operate a mill to grind flour and feed. It ground wheat and other grains for the farmers in the area. The dam and the mill were destroyed in the

flood of 1878, but were both rebuilt in 1879. The lower dam, the Holbrook dam, was built by Mr. William Holbrook and was an electric generator and supplied power to Arkansaw, making it the first town in the entire area to have electric lights.

Almost every home in Arkansaw had lights. The cost of the electricity was \$1 a month. However, since there were no other electrical appliances at the time the electricity produced by the dam was only used for lighting. Mr. Parker usually operated the plant from 5 p.m. until midnight each night. To pass time while he worked there, he would play checkers with Mr. Ed Rounds. When the dam was destroyed in the flood of 1907, it wasn't rebuilt and all of the electrical lines were sold to the Eau Galle dam for their use, and then electricity from Arkansaw came from the Eau Galle dam.

In 1979, less than a mile from the location of these dams, the Arkansaw Creek Park was completed. The park is a beautiful attraction for the village of Arkansaw. Each summer the community hosts Arkansaw Creek Park days.

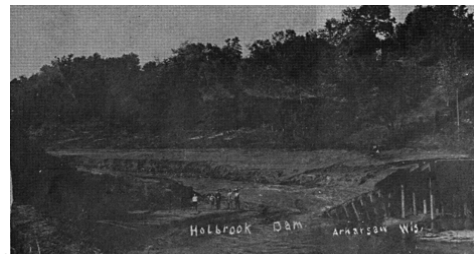
This page was created by Mike Miller and Joe Brunner in October of 1998.

These pictures are of the modern day Arkansaw Creek Park.

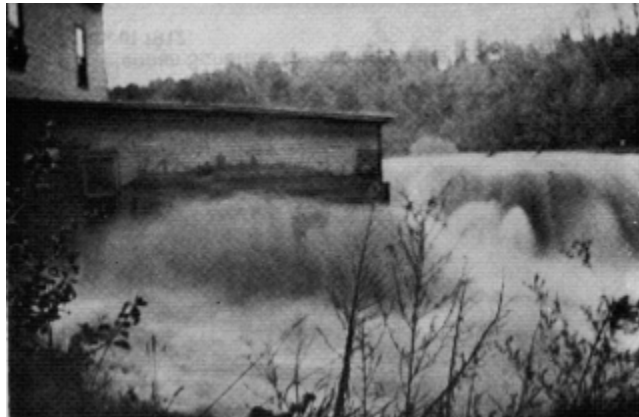




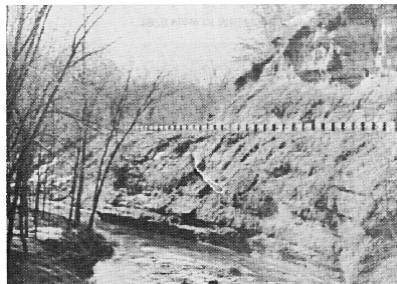
The Arkansaw park site in the early 1900's.



Holbrook Dam before and after the flood of 1907.



The bridge washed out in the flood of 1907, and was later rebuilt.



Park area picture including road and creek.