

I Remember Old Tuscaloosa

NOW that the outdoor swimming pools will soon be closed for the Winter, let's recall some of the old swimming holes of 1900 and later.

The Culvert. A small spring fed branch of water flowed west along the north side of the AGS & Warrior Southern Railroads, thence southwards through a culvert under the railroad tracks and on via creeks to

the Black Warrior River several miles below. The culvert is located in line with the junction of the University of Alabama Alavet Apartments and Thomas field.

The water was very cold and just deep enough to swim in. There was a hazard in the area—quicksand—but the boys were aware of it and respected

it. There was an unconfirmed rumor that a cow got caught in the quicksand and sank out of sight and was never recovered.

Swift Creek. This was one of my favorite swimming holes. It was located near Moody Swamp just beyond the railroad crossing—AGS and M&O—near Kaulton, There were deep holes for diving, waist deep parts for playing around and also swift shallow sections ideal for water wheels and other temporary constructions.

A worn path along the railroad track made an excellent bicycle route. A favorite multi-mode of transportation was to ride a bicycle to the M&O depot, catch the freight train bound for Montgomery (when we could meet their schedule) and jump off when the train stopped to blow its whistle at the crossing and then continue to the creek by "ankle express."

"Last man in is a rotten egg." Only seldom did we catch a freight train back to the depot. The fun we had at

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the creek more than made up for the long walk back to the depot and bicycles.

Spencer's Mill. The grist mill pond on Snow's Creek in Northport was very popular with old and young alike. The dam provided ample deep water for diving. The mill house was used as a dressing room while its foundation timbers allowed enough climbing hazards to satisfy the youngsters. The rope swing was ideally located to allow "take off" from a high bank and "drop" into the deepest part of the pond.

Mrs. Anna Harris, who learned to swim after she had passed her 60th birthday, gave performances from the rope swing that would put "the man on the flying trapeze" to shame.

This excellent swimming hole was inundated by the new Oliver Dam backwaters.

(Editor's note: To be continued next week.)