

# I Remember Old Tuscaloosa

By Fred Maxwell

(Editor's Note: This is another in a series of articles on old swimming holes in Tuscaloosa.)

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There were three lakes in the environs of Tuscaloosa that were largely used for swimming. They were:

1. Lake Loraine
2. Fern Lake
3. Stallworth's Lake

Lake Loraine was located on Bryce Hospital property and was well developed. In addition to the lake there was a bath house, a boat house (boats

for rent) and a pavilion for picnics and dancing.

It could be reached by the old horse-car (end of line) and later by the dummy line or by horse and buggy.

A remnant of the lake can be observed today by looking east between the two L&N overpasses on the 82 Bypass just south of the new river bridge near the city water pump house.

Fern Lake was also on Bryce Hospital property just east of Gulf States Paper Corp's plant near Holt. It was

a beautiful lake equipped with a bath house and a skiff for fishing and for frog gigging.

Stallworth's Lake appeared late on the scene (circa 1918). It was located on the west side of the foot of River Hill and across the road from the Tuscaloosa Motor Co. It covered much of the space occupied by the pre Civil War industrial complex which included a foundry, cotton mill, shot tower and other industrial activities. A dressing room existed at the site.

When this lake was abandoned it was used as a garbage dump and covered with dirt by the city. There is little evidence now of the area ever being the site of a swimming lake.

There were several good swimming holes in the various creeks a few miles out of the city limits. Included among there were:

A. Binion Creek near Samantha, an important tributary to the new Lake Tuscaloosa.

B. Hurricane Creek about eight miles northeast of the city. The water was fine but the creek was infested with leeches. Some physicians used leeches for bloodletting, an accepted treatment for some physical ailments. Once attached to a human body these slick rubbery parasites could seldom be removed by grasping and pulling with

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your fingers but a sidewise slap with the open hand would easily remove them.

C. Big Sandy Creek with its origin in a big cold spring near Coaling had the reputation of being the coldest water in the whole area. There were many swimming holes along this creek and the place I learned to swim was at Duncanville about 14 miles south of Tuscaloosa.

C. North River - A wonderful campground and swimming hole was located about three miles up North River where the first rapids or shoals were encountered. This spot is just south of the new dam for Lake Tuscaloosa.

I hope to re-visit this spot some day and see if I can locate any of the large beech trees in which I carved an arrow pierced heart with my initials below the arrow. It would be interesting to see whose initials are carved above the arrow.

D. Little Yellow Creek - This creek was best reached by canoe. It was on the north side of the Black Warrior River just below old Lock 13. Subsequent to our use of this swimming hole Lake Harris and Lake Nicol have been developed as a source of water for the City of Tuscaloosa.

(To be continued next week.)