

# I Remember Old Tuscaloosa

By Fred Maxwell

(Editor's Note: This is a continuation of Mr. Maxwell's comments last week on old swimming holes in Tuscaloosa County.)

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THE BLACK Warrior River provided almost unlimited swimming availability, however the nature of the banks, the ecology and easy access resulted in about four locations serving the greatest number of swimmers. These four were Riverview, Rock Quarry,

"B"—The Rock Quarry was not for the beginners or timid souls. It was patronized largely by the more experienced and expert swimmers.

There was a rock quarry on the south bank of the river a short distance below Riverview that supplies a large quantity of stone that went into the construction of Locks and dams No. 10, 11 and 12. The tippie for loading the stone on barges had several levels of cross timbers which permitted a diver to select a height that his courage and confidence allowed him for a dive. The water was about 30 feet deep at this point.

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"C"—The "Barge" was the product of a local swimming club. The club purchased an old river barge and anchored it in the river just north of Pinehurst (between Locks 10 and 11). Since the river was rather deep at this location a pen was built on the west end of the barge for swimming beginners with a latticed floor to keep its occupants from getting in water over their heads.

The barge was first anchored near

the "Barge," and the steamboat landing just below the old river bridge.

"A"—Riverview had many advantages such as:

1. Served by the street car line.
2. Served by a good graveled road.
3. Dressing rooms (at certain decades).
4. Concrete swimming pool (after 1915) with springboard and slide.
5. Located upstream from the city's sanitary sewers that emptied untreated into the river.

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the south bank of the river for convenience in boarding, however for ecology reasons it was shifted to the north side of the river. A skiff was provided to carry the swimmers to the barge, however most of the good swimmers preferred to swim across in spite of the ecology.

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"D"—The steamboat landing on the south side of the river between the old county bridge and the M&O Railroad river bridge was very popular for small boys primarily because it was so convenient. The road to the river before its level was raised by locks and dams below gave a gentle slope into the water not provided in other river swimming holes. Another feature the boys seemed to enjoy was the almost total absence of adult swimmers. This must have been due to the fact that another sanitary sewer emptied into the river near this location.

So there was an ecology problem without a sponsor even in those days. (To be continued next week.)