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At the extreme northern reach of Berrien County, another popular excursion resort was built. Lucy Lake, which was actually a widening of the Alapaha river about 4 miles above the town of Alapaha. The resort was established sometime before 1917, as the Ocilla Southern Railroad time table of that period shows two trains going north to Ocilla each day and two trains going south to Nashville each day.

Who the original creators of the resort has not been determined, however one of the earliest owners was Cleve Watson, and in the later years of existence, his son, Frank.

The main feature of the resort was the swimming pool which was fed by a sulfur spring artesian well about 40 feet from the pool itself. At the head of the well a small pond was created which contained a school of gold fish. The pool was enclosed by a wood-framed two story building with a spectators balcony and an eatery on the upper level.

Patrons came from Nashville, Ocilla, and points in between. If your party missed the return trip in the afternoon, they were forced to remain at the resort until the next morning. Small cabins, called a motor court, were available for rent, and a nearby service station and store provided gas and groceries for

Picnickers from Woodmen of the World find relief from the summer heat in the shade of pines and sycamores, in the heyday of Lucy Lake. The resort also offered swimming, fishing and lodging to weekend excursioners.

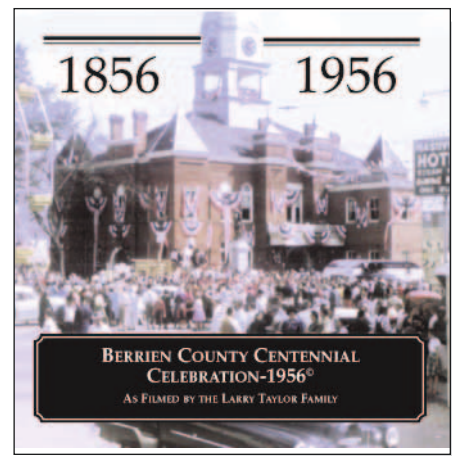
those who came unprepared.

Originally Highway 129 crossed a single track bridge over the Alapaha River right at Lucy Lake, which made the resort quite accessible by buggy, auto, or excursion train. However in 1937 the highway was paved and a new bridge was built upstream from the resort and the old bridge was torn down, and with it the fortunes of Lucy Lake.

The service station and store that provided staples for patrons for two decades, became a grist mill, which was rumored to provide a liquid form of ground corn—"white lightning."

The resort was a mere shell of itself by that time, and though there were some business speculators who tried to tempt investors into revitalizing the resort, it never was realized.

Today a faint rutted road leaves Highway 129 just before it crosses over the north bank of the river, and disappears into the wooded undergrowth. And somewhere therein are the remains of Lucy Lake. **OB**



BERRIEN COUNTY 1956 CENTENNIAL DVDs FOR SALE

There has been a great interest and response to the sale of the 1956 Berrien County Centennial celebration DVDs. The disks contains digital images of the Larry Taylor family home movies made at the time of the 1956 celebration. The 35 minute movie is silent, however the images will bring all of the commentary you could hope for when being viewed by you, your parents, or grandparents. It is a wonderful visit down memory lane when time was simpler and Nashville was a bustling tobacco town. The DVDs are available at the Perry Memorial Library, or by contacting Bryan Shaw at 229-563-0586. All proceeds go to funding the projects of the Berrien Historical Foundation.

We also encourage you to attend the Foundation's workshop, held on the first Thursday of each month, 7:00 p.m. at the Perry Memorial Library.



BERRIEN HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

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OLD BERRIEN

Newsletter of the
Berrien Historical
Foundation

Volume 2 Number 2

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THE EXCURSION A GETAWAY TO MAYHAW LAKE, DIXIE LAKE, OR LUCY LAKE



After a week of hard labor behind a plow and a stubborn mule, or scrubbing laundry by hand over a wash tub and scrubbing board, Berrien County residents were ready for a little rest and relaxation. However in 1910, there were no radios or television and few had an automobile to escape to the beach or the mountains.

Most found their diversion in small gatherings in neighbors homes, dancing to local musicians and joining in with vocal renditions of their favorite tunes, or going for a swim in their local swimming hole at Futch's Ferry, or Sandy Bluff.

However if they wanted to enjoy a cool dip in a refreshing spring, or hold hands with their sweetheart while gliding along on a pair of roller skates, they

Bathers at Mayhaw Lake near Ray City in 1914 are quite scantily dressed for their dip in the sulphur spring-fed pool, at least by comparison to the heavily frocked patrons in the spectators gallery. The pool appears quite shallow on the end shown here, however it was quite deep on the other end as there were reports of near-drownings by adults who lost their grip on the safety rope seen at the left.

looked to spend the day on an excursion to one of their favorite recreation spots in the county—Mayhaw Lake near Ray City, Dixie Lake on the edge of Sparks, or Lucy Lake just north of Alapaha.

Mayhaw Lake was “The Place” in the county for more than a decade. It was built in 1914 by Elias Moore “Hun” Knight, father of W. D. Knight. In his inaugural newspaper advertisement, Mr Knight expounded upon the “fine bathing pool supplied by fine sulfur water, one of the best Skating Rinks and Box Ball Allers [bowling alley] in this Section. Cold drinks, hot lunches at all hours during day and night: also a good ball diamond open to visiting teams for match games.”

The amusement park was such a popular spot that the Georgia & Florida Railroad gave special rates for picnic parties from all points on their line. A boarding house up the road towards Ray City, was opened up by the Paul Knight family, specifically to provide lodging for the Mayhaw crowd. People arriving in Ray City by train would often disembark just south of the J.M. Patten home and be shuttled to the lake or the boarding house by horse and buggy or by mule and wagon.

Young people were the most frequent patrons, finding great glee in gliding around on the three inch thick pine wood floors, supported by 12 x 12 sills underneath. Outside was a large open-air bathing pool, fed by a deep spring well, and enclosed on four sides by a balcony for viewing the swimmers. Picnic tables and concession stands were plentiful. Across from the rink was a lime sink pond where mayhaw trees flourished.

People from all over the area would journey to Mayhaw Lake, especially on holidays such as the 4th of July and Labor Day. On these occasions there would be a full day of fun and frolic highlighted by a baseball game in the afternoon. The local team was one of the best semi-pro teams in this part of the country. Among the players were Henry and Bryant Swindle, Roy Carter, Marshall Sirmans, Elmer Shaw, and Charlie Shaw.



Mayhaw Lake
JULY 31st, 1914.
There will be a big barbecue and dance free to all.
 For a day of feasting and pleasure you can't afford to miss it. The program will be as follows.
 1. Skating until 11 o'clock a. m.
 2. Dinner at 12 o'clock.
 3. Dancing until 2 o'clock p. m.
 4. Skating until 8 o'clock p. m.
 5. Dancing again 8 to 12 o'clock p. m.
 Music furnished by a good string band.
 For other amusements. Bathing. Bowling, Eating and Drinking. Beginning Friday night the 17th of July, there will be a big dance every Friday night of each week. Dance will begin at 8 o'clock, and last until 12.
 Music will be furnished for each dance by a good string band.
 Dont forget the date, July 31st, at MAY-HAW LAKE. Half mile from Rays Mill, Ga.
COME! EVERYBODY INVITED
 E. M. KNIGHT Prop.

On Saturday nights there was a black piano player who played for dances on the skating rink floor. It was also a popular place for Sunday School picnics.

However, when the young soldiers returned home after WWI and settled down to family life, the resort lost much of its appeal. Many families owned automobiles and they found more attractive destinations outside of the county. Sometime before 1926, the roller skating rink was closed and converted into a home owned by Hollis Williams. The swimming pool contin-

Posing in front of the roller skating rink at Mayhaw Lake in 1914, left to right: Burton Moore; Tom Parrish; Manson Johnson; unidentified lady; Charlie Ruth Shaw with her husband, Bruner, and daughter, Juanita; lady; Viola Smith Davis; lady; Mrs. Burton Moore and daughters, Kate Hazen, Thelma Register; Lonnie Smith; boy; man; Shellie Ziegler; and Jessie Ziegler Touchton. Members of the band in the background include: Rossie Swindle, Glenn Johnson, Lonnie Swindle, and J. H. Swindle.

To the left, newspaper advertisement from the Nashville Herald, promoting the events at the resort. The day started at 11:00 a.m. and ran until midnight.

ued in operation until the early 1930s, when the depressed economy forced Mr. Knight to lose the property. Today, as you turn off of Highway 37 onto Park Street, and travel down past New Ramah Church, it is hard to imagine this little lane once was a busy thoroughfare bringing vacationers from all over South Georgia. A few hundred yards further down the dirt road on the left, you come to the converted roller-skating-rink home of the Williams. There is no sign of the swimming pool. The trees still provide a shady setting which easily brings to mind the hordes of Picnickers who once covered the grounds.



Across the road, a cultivated field has erased the baseball diamond that brought some of South Georgia's best ball players together in community duels. About 75 yards out into the field, the little lime sink depression is still visible, and mayhaw trees still surround the dried up recess, once known as Mayhaw Lake.

On the more westerly side of Berrien County, Rev. H. S. Dixon was digging a well one day and hit a sulphur spring. In 1914 a group of Sparks businessmen purchased the property and built one of the most popular entertainment centers in South Georgia, called Dixie Lake.

A large pool was constructed where the sulphur springs could feed it. Over the pool a two-story building was built. A balcony was built encircling the pool on the second floor where spectators could observe those swimming.

Located adjacent to the Dixie Lake (why it was given that name is a bit of a mystery since it was only a bathing

pool, and there was not a lake nearby) was skating rink, a restaurant and, at one time, a movie show. During its heyday, people would come from miles for a swim in the cooling waters of Dixie Lake and enjoy the other recreational facilities. The Georgia & Florida Railroad even had its own excursion trains which came to Sparks where employees enjoyed their annual picnic.

The resort operated until the mid-20s, when it was forced to close because of lack of support. Much like Mayhaw Lake, many young men of the community went off to war and when they returned they found other venues more attractive.

In later years a stone building replaced the wooden frame structure that covered the bathing pool. Part of the lumber used in the original building which surrounded the pool, was moved to the W. E. Patterson farm east of Sparks, where it was used to construct a barn and out building on the property.

However, in the early 1960s, the stone building was finally demolished and the pool filled in.

This photo graph of Dixie Lake was taken during its heyday when excursions by wagon, buggy, automobile and train, brought patrons from as far away as Macon. They enjoyed the cool spring bathing pool, above center, rollerskating, above left, and fine dining at the restaurant, above right. Note the buggy in the background, right. The automobile was fast becoming a familiar sight, and though it provided a convenient mode for the patrons here, the invention was eventually doomed Dixie Lake.

When Interstate 75 was built, an overpass was created at the extension of West Colquitt Street in Sparks, which encroached on the property of old Dixie Lake. The bathing pool was located just on the south side of Colquitt Street, also known as the Sparks Cutoff Road, and just east of the freeway off-ramp at that exit. It is fair to speculate how refreshing that cool spring pool would have felt to so many who were engaged in the construction of that freeway and overpass.