

The Swimming Pool

by Lynne Belluscio

Now that summer has finally arrived with a vengeance there are a lot of people, especially the kids who really wished there was a place to swim in LeRoy.

Before the age of swimming pools, the kids in LeRoy swam in the pool at Red Bridge, near the Munson Street Bridge. From the 1922 book, "Where and How LeRoy Plays" is the following paragraph. "Classes for all grades of swimmers have been conducted each summer at the pools at Red Bridge. Hundreds of beginners have been taught to swim. The more advanced pupils have been taught the further accomplishments of aquatic ability. At the water carnival each summer it is an impressive sight to see the complete confidence with which the entire youthful population, as it seemed, took to the water."

The photograph shows a large wooden pontoon with both a high diving board and a low diving board with about twenty kids ready for diving lessons. Out in the pond is a canoe, with watchful lifeguards. On a hot summer day it was probably pretty refreshing. But in 1922, the LeRoy Recreation Commission, which had been organized by Mayor H.B. Ward, proposed a new swimming pool and park facility. "It is often said, My generation grew up without being so pampered. We made good citizens. Why all this fuss and expense over organized play? Very good and wise words these would be if conditions fac-



ing our young folks today were the same as they were a generation ago.

A multiplication of interests, an enormous expansion of entertainment, a magic facility for transportation have brought complications into the lives of our boys and girls. He who trusts them solely to the undirected regime of the simple days before the movie, the modern dance, the new liquor problem and motor car will doubtless come to the conclusion some morning that the whole world is going to the dogs - - which isn't always the case at all. "The thoughts haven't changed much in over eighty years, only now we're concerned about the influence of video games, the

internet and drugs.

The LeRoy Commission had a list of "needs" which included at the top of the list "A new and safe swimming pool" followed by a regulation playground with wading pool for smaller children; at least two bowling greens for men, in the new park. Believe it or not, the new park was planned along the Creek, next to Mill Street - - where the two bowling greens are now located. Next on the list was a basket-ball floor which would be available for boys and girls outside of school hours. The Commission also wanted a permanent club house for scouting and other organizations and "some day, a fine modern indoor swimming pool for everybody." I guess you could say that LeRoy has a history of taking it's time to make decisions. On the other hand, if the pool had been built in the 1920s, it would certainly have

been obsolete by now.

Harold Olmsted, a local architect, drew up plans for the proposed outdoor swimming pool. It was to be located near the new park on Mill Street, "below the Main Street Bridge." At that time, the post office had not been built and the new swimming pool would have been about where the playground is located now. A note below the architects drawing mentions that an alternate location for the pool would have been at the tennis courts.

Well, as you can figure out, nothing came of the plans for the new swimming pool and it would be many many years before the pool near Munson Street would be built. In the 1922 book, it was written: "There are a lot of indifferent adults that have to be painfully taught that the world changes."



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