



The lagoon at Citizens Park led to a freshwater gravel pit where young men swam on hot summer days.

SKIP TO THE SLOUGH

BEFORE THERE WERE inground swimming pools throughout Barrington, before there was a Park District swimming pool in 1930, and before a Jewel Lagoon was formed at around the same time, there was a swimming hole. Local boys who needed a break from the summer heat had one thing to consider. It was akin to the 1844 American prairie song "Skip to My Lou". But rather than preventing someone from stealing their dance partner, as the song goes, it was their clothes they hung onto while swimming in the slough (slōō).

Marvin Snyder recalled those days in "Tales of Old Barrington", published for the Bicentennial in 1976. He was born in 1906, a grandson of original village pioneer, Edward Lamey.

"On hot days there was nothing like the old swimming hole. Some of us walking with shoes on, some walking with overalls and knickers buttoned at the knees, we all were heading down North Hawley Street (now North Avenue) to Lake Zurich Road to a small clump of woods where Jewel Tea plant later stood, but was then all farmland.

There, at the edge of the woods, off came the clothes to skinny dip. We carried our clothes way over our heads. We didn't dare leave them on the banks. We were afraid that someone would hide them and we would have to go home without.

Pushing through McClure's slough with water almost chest high, mud two or three inches deep, and with weeds and cattails, for about a block, we walked through this way, hoping not to lose any parts of our clothing. Some of us did, such as shoes, socks, underwear.

There, in front of our vision, was the gravel pit with the most beautiful spring water where most of us learned to swim. After the fun, back through McClure's slough to the edge of the woods to dress and start on our way back to town."

This recollection from almost a century ago is part of the history of what is now a treasured community asset, Citizens Park. [U](#)