



McKown's Grove pool in 1958.

McKownville: News And Comment

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Discussion of a new town park in McKownville brought back memories of McKown's Grove, which provided McKownville families with summer recreation from its inception in 1896 to 1973. In the month of June 1958, 25 years ago, a new, revitalized swimming pool facility was opened there.

We are indebted to the files of *The Turnpike Record*, that little gem of a newspaper which formerly served the McKownville-Westmere area, for the photo reproduced here. It was taken at the time of opening of the new pool.

Swimming had always been one of the attractions at the grove. In its early years the swimming hole was formed by damming the west branch of the Krumkill, whose clear, unpolluted waters (in those days) filtered over sand for some distance.

The pool of 1958 was cleansed by

a series of aboveground filters fed from well points sunk around one end of the pool. It had a concrete bottom and the stream which had formerly fed it directly was piped beneath the concrete bottom. There were picnic facilities at the south side and a beach on the north side. Bathhouses were at the northeast corner at the McKown Road end. Parking facilities were across the road.

Scarcely a child growing up in this area during that era did not learn to swim there. Alas! There remains scarcely a trace to indicate the location of the old grove and pool. Few photos have been unearthed. Anyone having photos is invited to contact this writer who could copy them for adding to the historical collection.

The tiny Krumkill west branch over the years provided, through a series of dams, water for the old McKown Hotel, stock pens, and livestock; a pond behind the Methodist Church for cutting ice in winter; the pond, still in existence, at Western Ave. which provided McKownville with water for many years; and further down, the pond previously discussed for swimming at the Grove.

No less than five dams in all existed. All but one are gone. The east branch was dammed to form

the Former County Club pond, now the University Pond, which at one time supplied water for the old "Five Mile House" tavern on the King's Highway to Schenectady.

The one remaining pond, the McKownville Reservoir, may be doomed also, thanks to construction activities which affect the feeder streams.

Since construction at the Crossgates site has begun, the water in the reservoir and its tributary streams have taken on a rich chocolate color, indicating that considerable quantities of silt are being washed down. Nothing indicates that any precautions have been taken by the builders to prevent this silting problem.

EnCon, that guardian of forest and stream, was willing to give the permits for the construction of Crossgates. But it is apparently looking away when stream protection is needed.

During construction of the Thruway, silt was washed down and it cost the McKownville Water District a considerable sum to dredge the reservoir. Indications that such negligent actions do not need to happen occurred during the construction of the Fuller Road Alternate and the Washington Ave. Extension where the State of New York went to great lengths to protect our feeder streams. And no damage occurred. [article continues on another topic]