

DUNCAN BROOK RECOLLECTIONS

**An overview of its history
and
Interviews with residents who attended**

Eagle Project
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AN OVERVIEW OF DUNCAN BROOK'S HISTORY

Duncan Brook's history is rich in depth and complexity. Off of Chalet Road on Route 9, it has been home to a variety of people, including cattle farmers and swimmers. People have always had something good to say about Duncan Brook.

Duncan Brook was originally Duncan Farm, owned by the Duncan family. It was often used for crops and, later, tending cattle. A dam built across the brook was used to create a water supply for Flintstone Farm and nearby areas. The road it lies off of used to provide a path to Cheshire, but a lack of maintenance has let it fall into disrepair. The brook became a popular spot for picnics, campouts, and the occasional swim. Therefore, it was quite natural for the town to look towards the area when considering places to put an outdoor swimming facility. Though buses already transported swimmers to and from lakes Plunkett and Ashmere, and our Community House had a historic swimming pool, one of the first in the nation, an outdoor swimming location to replace the long-abandoned Weston's Beach would be far more convenient.

Despite weather-related difficulties, on June 28th, 1959, it opened to the public. Its first season was a great success, attracting an estimated 143 people daily and 9,009 attendees over the season. It was run by Beachmaster Raymond "Joe" Smart and assisted by Rachael Allen. Smart would resign early in the next season, with Stanley Zaleski taking over his position. Smart returned the next year and was eventually replaced by Mark Poopor, a lifeguard. Maintenance of the area became the responsibility of the Public Works Department under the supervision of Thomas Callahan.

A busing system transported swimmers to and from the area between 1 and 5 PM. The busing system was canceled the following year due to weather-related low attendance, but resumed the following year. It was originally a daily bus, but eventually was limited to two days, followed by three days in its final year as an official town swimming hole.

A grand opening of Dalton playgrounds in 1964 resulted in one of the largest opening days in the town's history. It's estimated 4,230 people attended Duncan Brook that year, and the annual Penny Carnival, held in mid-August, raked in \$107. The following year brought in 6,217 people.

The town sought a new, more convenient location for a swimming area, and set their sights on an area behind the Dalton American Legion, and set the Legion pool to replace the area in 1967. This did not, however, signal the end of Duncan Brook's popularity. In 1966, the lifeguards operated from 11 AM to 6 PM, and bussing increased to three times a week. An estimated 300 children attended the picnic held at the facility. However, 1967 came, and the Legion took its place. The Campfire council began to use Duncan Brook as a day camp area, but families still used the area occasionally for camping or picnicking. The pool was cleaned out in 1968, and 120 feet of pipe were laid near the bottom to carry out cold water. This ended up warming the water by 10 degrees. Maintenance continued into the next year.

Unfortunately, 1975 marked a disastrous year for the area. Donovan Gravel Company dredged the brook, but high waters later on led to flooding, and the brook silted in. Despite the destruction, the area was still maintained for a while afterwards. Vandals would later desecrate the concrete bathhouse and use it as a party location. The Legion pool would later suffer a similar silt-based fate.

INTERVIEW #1: Virginia Wrzesinski

When did you first go to Duncan brook?

1966, 67.

How far away was it from your home?

About three miles.

How did you get to Duncan Brook?

I went up in a car.

How often did you go?

Maybe, during the summer, once a month.

Was there a fee to get in?

No.

Was the water cold?

Yes.

Did you learn to swim there?

No.

Were there any lifeguards?

Yes.

Did you ever work there?

No.

Did you ever encounter any wildlife?

Oh yes deer, rabbits, all the small stuff.

Was there a snack bar there?

Not when I was there, no.

What is your favorite memory of Duncan Brook?

Just that it was very cold up there.

Why did it close?

I'm not sure why they did that, as far as I know they didn't have the equipment to keep it going.

What did you do after it closed?

Well the kids used to go to Plunket Lake and Ashmere Lake in Hinsdale.

Thank you.

INTERVIEW #2: Mark Poopor

When did you first go to Duncan brook?

I don't know.

How far away was it from your house?

Right across the street and over the hill.

How did you get there?

Drove at 16, before that took the bus.

How often did you go?

Every day.

Was there a fee to get in?

No.

Was the water cold?

Very.

Did you learn to swim there?

No, I learned at the community house.

Were there any lifeguards?

I was a lifeguard. When we started, there were 3 of us. Two on the stands, one on the low end. We rotated every 20 minutes.

What sort of training did you receive for lifeguarding?

Instructor training, the town sent me to that. Life saving Red Cross, got that at the community house.

Did you ever encounter any wildlife up there?

I saw a couple of deer now and then but nothing major, skunks if you want to count that. They liked the garbage cans.

Was there some sort of concession stand or snack bar?

Yes there was a cinderblock building there that had it.

It's still there.

It's still there? Well it's in pretty rough shape! Were toilets on each side – boys, girls - and then there was a counter in the middle where we got candy bars, small stuff.

Did you eat at the snack bar?

No, I ate before I got there.

What is your favorite memory of Duncan Brook?

The lifeguard part. It was a good place to be and work. It's just that the water was really chilly. You get used to it after a while. But it was fun.

Why did it close?

The Legion opened up the swimming pool in the back of there and the town moved into the back of that.

Did people attend even after the Legion pool?

Well, we weren't up there but I'm sure people did swim up there for quite a while. There were a lot of parties up there. People could get up there; all the roads were still good. There was a parking lot up on the top. But most of the parking was up on the top or right along the road.

And what did you do after it closed?

I worked as a lifeguard down at the legion pool. Then I got married and stopped being a lifeguard.

Do you happen to have any photographs from Duncan Brook at all?

Not that I could put my hands on.

Were there any incidents that you remember saving anybody?

The one that I remember the most, a twin boy and a girl, they were down at the shallow end; the mother was tanning or something. They went under the rope and came up and started walking towards the deeper end well there was a pipe that went underneath the pipe and when those kids stepped off that pipe they were in over their head. The lifeguard down at that end didn't see them. I came in the other end and went in and came out the other side with them.

Any other interesting stories from up there?

There was a diving board 4 feet off the water. There was a stand in the deep end it was 18-20 feet deep - now it's about 6 inches. There was a spillway right there during the spring. That went down between where the sand was and the grassy side and the road that goes up through the mountain. The flood came down and washed out the beach 2 or 3 times so they finally ran a pipe and put a drain right at the dam so when it came up it would go over down to a pipe and then back out into the brook. Did the town truck in more sand when it got washed?

You mean there was sand there?

Oh yeah a nice sandy beach, in front of the concession stand right there it was all sand. The other side of the sand there was a grassy part. People came out and put a blanket down and laid out in the sun. The water was cold.

Do you know of anyone else who went to Duncan Brook?

Almost all the kids in the town at that time were going - there wasn't any other place to go. I went up as a swimmer.

Were there fish in there?

There were native trout for a while. There was fish in the brook. And blueberries way up above the parking lot. Which was on the top of the hill with a dirt path that went down to the brook. There were picnic tables on the shade side; there were hibachis on a pipe that was nailed right there so you could picnic bring your own charcoal and cook. But up on the top there was one big blueberry bush. And there were several little ones, but that one I'd be up there every other day.

Did you ever see any bears?

No, bears would be going through there later at night, when we weren't around.

What were its hours?

1 to 5 was lifeguard coverage. But anyone could go up there any other time.

So it just operated as a town park?

Well, it was a swimming place for the kids. Before that they used the buses up to Hinsdale to Plunkett and Ashmere.

Were they school buses?

Yes. Pick us up at the community house and drop us off there. It was all being paid for by the CRA.

The top of the hill would be the parking lot?

The road you come up goes straight up all the way to Windsor, but it was washed out quite a while ago. You turned and went by the concession stand. You went right up to the top of the hill and the parking lot was up there. So you had to walk down the hill to get to the picnic tables and the water.

Was there still that farm there off to the right?

The mill was up there. There was a lumberyard up over the top. Have the Boy Scout inhabited the area?

We use it. We fixed the roof and use it for campouts. And the diving board stand is still there.

INTERVIEW #3: Dick Johnson

When did you first go to Duncan Brook?

I'm gonna guess 5th grade or junior high. So 1966.

How far away from it was your home?

3 or 4 miles.

How did you get there?

Either by car or bicycle.

How often did you go?

Oh, probably depended on the heat, maybe twice a month.

Was there a fee to get in?

You know, I don't remember. I know there was a room to change. I don't remember. Is the building still there?

Yes, it's still there. It isn't in very good condition. Was the water cold?

I think so, not real cold, not as cold as Wahconah falls.

Did you learn to swim there?

No, I learned to swim at the community house.

Were there lifeguards there?

Yes.

Did you ever work there?

No.

Did you ever encounter any wildlife there?

No, well I guess a turtle, frogs, could be kind of interesting to young children. I don't remember fish. No deer or bears.

Was there a concession stand?

Yes, and a locker room.

What was your favorite memory of Duncan Brook?

Probably riding up there on my bicycle, I didn't have to get a ride, I could get back on my own. Oh and going with friends.

Why did it close?

Maybe they found another place closer to town? Maybe the Dalton American Legion pool.

What did you do after it closed?

Then I was in high school so I swam at the Legion pool.

INTERVIEW #4: Maureen Mitchell

When did you first go to Duncan Brook?

I'm a Dalton native so camp Nawakwa was the campfire camp so that had to have been mid 50's.

How far away from it was your home?

At that point I lived on Carson Ave. so that's about 3 miles.

How did you get there?

I was a campfire girl, so someone had to – by bus, used to be campfire camp and it used to be the recreation area for the town. They had little hibachi grill type things, could probably see the stands for them, ya know, where you camp out. That used to be a swimming hole. It had a diving board on it, and if you dove into the water and went down like 4 inches, it was spring fed and you get a shock effect. And it used to be much deeper than the puddle it is now.

Yes, someone said it was about 18 feet to 20 feet deep in spots.

At one point at the dam – It used to be the water supply for our end of town, but when they made it into a swimming hole, they improved it. But you see now that it's cattails and the devil's piece of the river that gets in and around it, but Donovan's Gravel Company destroyed it when up above their settling pond burst. And it flooded that space, came down - I live in the house at the bottom. Flooded our barn. Wiped out the road. And it's never been the same since. I live in the big white house.

How often did you go?

When we were little, probably not too long, because it wasn't a good place for swimming. Just a couple years. And it used to be a place where you had picnics too. But again it wasn't the best.

Was there a fee to get in?

No, it was part of the town like the parks.

Was the water cold?

It was extremely cold, yes. The top surface was heated by the sun. And then when you dove in and hit that cold underneath. You can still see the remnants of the diving board. The anchor part is still there.

Did you learn to swim there?

Nope. The C.R.A. pool. Everybody in Dalton learned to swim in the C.R.A pool.

Were there lifeguards there?

I don't remember. I'm sure there were. But I don't have an impression.

Did you ever work there?

No.

Did you ever encounter any wildlife there?

Oh, indeed. Right now we have a whole squadron of 40 turkeys. We have a dozen coyotes. We've seen a moose go through there. The deer have sort of been forced out of the mountains by the coyotes. Bardin's cows got out on occasion. He rotates pastures and the fences aren't in the best of shape. I'm always calling him early morning and tell him his cows are on route nine again.

Was there a concession stand?

I know they had a bathhouse and restrooms. But I don't think there was a concession stand. You had boys and girls bathrooms. One on the back side, and I think the other was on the front edge. The liberty pole which goes down and hooks down into what is actually Chalet Rd and that's been abandoned and you have the old logging bridge, well at that point, I don't know what it is but there is some kind of stand pipe that oozes this God-awful and it would have to be septic up there. Because it's obviously not in the sewer. So there is some type of sanitary structure in that little nip at the end because it was regular porcelain appliances.

What was your favorite memory of Duncan Brook?

I live there so I see it everyday. I think my brother owned the house. I was in the house up above that he built. And he and his wife are having breakfast, and looking out a window and he looked at his wife and she's speechless and he can't figure out what's going on. Turns around, the moose is right outside the window. And the moose went off into Duncan Brook. There was like a family of them up in Windsor, and when the babies get to be youngsters and they get driven out so they range especially when they are looking for their girlfriends. They range for quite a distance.

Why did it close?

Well the town owned the property. They had the campfire camp there and after it got destroyed by the flood and they never repaired it, they had to breach the dam. The stream was driven around the dam and you saw how silted it got and now it's been taken over with cattails. And they never reclaimed it. And the vandals that are trying to tear down the structure. The porcupines used to love to chew that plywood in the upper deck there and if I see the partiers I off and call the police. I had tenants there and they were state troopers and when the cruisers were parked there they had no trouble with partiers.

What did you do after it closed?

We live in the house down below. So they had to repair the road, and we had to muck out the barn. You've seen the two-story barn that is the garage, the water went right through it and out the other side. But they kept the road open as far up as what was my brother's house. He has since sold it and the doctor lives there now. And when you camped out he would be in Florida and you could park in his driveway. Cause he didn't care cause he was away.

Any other interesting stories?

There was somebody up there that shouldn't have been. And they burned, I don't know if it was one of your big round spools, but they had flames that must have been twenty feet in the air. And it was during the dry part of the season. It was a year or two ago. I thought they were going to take the structure down. It was called Duncan Brook road because of the Duncan family.

INTERVIEW #5: Mark Franklin

When did you first go to Duncan Brook?

I was probably twelve or thirteen when I first went.

How far away from it was your home?

It's probably... I would say three or four miles away. I lived in the center of town.

How did you get there?

Sometimes, I got a ride with Mark, actually, because he was driving up to lifeguard and I was friends with his brother. So we would ride with them. Other times, I would go on the bus, and there was a bus at Pinegrove Park at 11 o'clock in the morning, and it would take you to Duncan Brook and pick you up at five o'clock in the afternoon.

How often did you go?

I would say two or three times a week in the summer if I could, and maybe that's an exaggeration. It seemed like that, anyway. I spent a lot of time there. Probably for two years in my middle school years, and then by the time I was in high school, it was closed. Say, by the time I was in ninth grade, I wasn't yet working at the Legion, but my brother-in-law was. So I'm guessing there was a period there, because I actually couldn't go to work there until I got my lifeguard's license, and that wasn't until I was sixteen. So, two or three years, then. I'm guessing that I went with my folks when I was even younger, but probably not. That is, my mom brought us up there; she might have sat at a picnic table while we swam as youngsters, but I mostly remember it in that part of my life where most of my memories reside, which is my middle school years, like my early teens.

Was there a fee to get in?

I don't recall it costing anything and the bus didn't cost anything.

Was the water cold?

Yeah. Yeah, it was moving water, so you could count on it being cold. You could also count on it being clean, although it was not clear. It was brown, because it had a muddy bottom. And deep; that is, off the diving board, it was probably pretty deep.

Mr. Poopor actually mentioned it was 18 to 20 feet deep at certain points.

In certain places? He would know. He probably went to the bottom. He used to grab a heavy stone and walk across underwater in one of the narrower parts. Its widest part was probably where the concrete structure was, at the diving board, and then it gradually narrowed as it moved toward its source, which was a little river. I think that was the decline of it – something happened up above that caused the erosion and then the sand to come through and fill it in.

Did you learn to swim there?

No. Actually, I learned to swim at the Dalton CRA pool. I got my beginners, and I also took my first lifesaving courses when I was fifteen or sixteen at the Dalton CRA, where I also spent a lot of time. Even in the summertime, the pool was open, so I would go there, too.

Do you remember anything in particular about the lifeguards?

I remember who they were. Mark and his brother were lifeguards. The older uncle of Sarah Whitestone – Robert Whitestone – was a lifeguard. There were some women lifeguards there. One was named Diane Deangelus. Her father was the CRA director. Those are the ones I remember right off the bat. Then, of course, Nancy Perrson. She was my boss for a couple of years. I never worked at Duncan Brook, either. The American Legion pool was the pale successor to Duncan Brook, in that it didn't have the charm and the remoteness, and the water wasn't as clean. We spent a lot of time trying to keep it from being contaminated. As lifeguards, we threw a lot of chlorine in there, which I don't want to talk about.

Did you ever encounter any wildlife when you were up there?

Not that I can remember. It certainly was deep enough in the woods, but maybe because it was so populated so often, especially in the summertime, maybe certain animals would stay away.

Do you remember anything about the concession stand?

There was a building - as far back as I remember, anyway – that had candy bars, Coke, not cooked food. Probably, potato chips and stuff. It was limited. That certainly cost money. It also was the bathhouse. One of the things they had was baskets for you to put your regular clothes in, and when they gave you the basket, they gave you a numbered rubber bracelet to put on that matched the number on the basket.

That building's still up there. It's not in good condition.

I'm sure it's been ravaged. The other thing I remember about that building was on the corner of it was a large loudspeaker that played AM radio music, which was constantly blaring. You didn't have to bring your own radio, because they were playing popular music on the broadcast.

What was your favorite memory of Duncan Brook?

I don't know if this is my favorite memory, but when I was twelve or thirteen, I was probably first interested in girls. One of my favorite memories is sitting on a blanket next to someone I was fond of, and being invited to, which was kind of a big deal for a thirteen year old. That certainly lingers in my mind. Another one, I think was, I wouldn't call it a favorite memory, it was something that stuck out, and that is one day, when I was there, the new CRA director decided to test the lifeguards without them knowing. And he told Mr. P. West, who was probably only thirteen or fourteen at the time, to jump in and then to pretend that he was struggling to see if anybody would respond. I don't remember how it ended, I just remember that Mark and probably some of the other lifeguards thought it was kind of a cheap trick, because they were paying attention. I was there on that occasion. I remember the guy who set it up, because I worked with him as a junior leader in those years too, the first couple years of my teens. I don't remember any contests, especially. I just remember enjoying being up there with my friends. There were a lot of older teenagers there, or at least it seemed like it, coming and going there. I think I felt like it was my exposure to older people, so I could look at what I was supposed to become. You don't get that many opportunities to see older boys and girls when you're thirteen. But this was one of those places where you were seeing them all over the place. There was a grassy area as you came up to Duncan Brook before you got to the diving board. There was a grassy area to the left and there was sand that led over to the bathhouse, and the grassy area was where everybody put their blankets and sat and played cards and stuff. There were picnic tables on the periphery - not where we hung out - but up toward the wooded area, especially on the right side as you're going to the narrow part of it. I don't recall too much activity, but I'm sure that there was. I don't know if people stayed into the evening. I don't think I ever worked at the same time Mark was working; he was considered the Beachmaster by the time he was done. I think, by the time I started to work, Nancy Perrson had become the

Beachmaster. But Mark was kind of a relative. He is now, but I certainly grew up right around the corner from him. By the time I was sixteen, the brook wasn't swimmable. It was already rather shallow, but it wasn't in such disrepair that it was an ugly place to visit. I know Pete Barden had something to do with the establishment of Duncan Brook. I know John Brodderick's father was one of the people who pioneered providing recreational opportunities for people in Dalton. He actually loaned out his backyard for people to ski right on High Street, and I think he had something to do with establishing Duncan Brook as a swimming area. When I came back here to live, after being away for college, I was on the CRA board, and one of the things they talked about at the time was establishing a public swimming area to replace the Dalton American Legion, which was already decrepit, and this is in the mid-70's, early 80's. They were really talking seriously about a combination indoor-outdoor pool, and they were trying to figure out where to build it. They were looking at properties and it never happened. That's a whole other history, but because of that, many people that lived at the time of the Duncan Brook era think about that as the last real public swimming area that we had here. Maybe our memories are a little bit romantic, because they're from so long ago, but I worked through the next decade and saw what happened, and I can tell you that we never really – even though they built another bathhouse at the Legion pool, and a diving board, and the whole nine yards, it was never quite the same. Duncan Brook was a very special place.

So why did they decide to move to the Legion? Did they just want a place closer to Dalton?

No. I think that by the time they did that, Duncan Brook had already suffered a major silting. Something had happened up above. I don't think they closed Duncan Brook spontaneously. I think some natural or industry-related event occurred that caused the brook to fill up, and it was no longer usable as a public swimming area. It seems to me that there wouldn't have been any other reason to do it. They might have wanted something closer to town. I remember that someone said that there was a construction company that evidently, because of their operations above, that created the situation where the brook filled in. That may have been inaccurate information. I do think that it closed because it had to. At one point, they improved the exit water. When I first went up there as a kid, that concrete structure didn't exist.

Did people go there even before it was officially opened in 1959?

I don't know. I would have been seven at that time. It really was my childhood. It must have been a relatively new thing. It was a beautiful location. I have memories of walking down Duncan Brook Road and getting a ride with people coming by on Route 9 or getting a ride to the bottom of the road, or taking my bicycle.

INTERVIEW #6: Walter Elwood

When did you first go to Duncan brook?

I have no idea when the dates were. Probably when I was in high school in the early 60's. It might have been before that, when I was in junior high school. That would have been back in 1959.

How far away was it from your home?

I lived on Central Avenue, and I would ride over to High Street, up Route 9, so I would guess maybe three miles.

You mentioned you got there by bicycle?

Yep.

How often did you go up there?

One summer, maybe two or three times a week in the morning.

Was the water cold?

The water was freezing cold – at least that was my perception, especially at a depth. There was a long dam on the south end, and then the water would back up to the brook maybe 100 to 150 feet down to where the brook came in. It was certainly wider at the dam. I remember there was a string of buoys at the north end of Duncan Brook, and there were weeds down there and stuff where the water came in; that was very cold. Right off of the dam where they have the diving board, it was deep. I remember, I went off the diving board, and I bet it was 12 or so feet deep, maybe even deeper. It was deep. I used to go down to the bottom and bring mud up. It was freezing cold at the bottom. I remember I would come out of the water and swim over to side, and you would walk up on the sandy beach on the east side. There was a bathhouse there. I remember going into the bathhouse. I can't remember if they sold anything there or what, but I remember the bathhouse. I didn't spend any time there – I was always in the water. I used to go up with a couple of other kids from the Dalton area. We used to ride our bikes up.

Did you learn to swim there?

No. I learned to swim at the Community House pool in Dalton.

Do you remember anything in particular about the lifeguards?

No. I don't even remember any lifeguards. I'm sure there were lifeguards, but I don't remember them.

Did you ever work there?

Nope. I remember that I had to stand up on my bicycle to pedal – there was a dirt road that went from Route 9 up to Duncan Brook, and I had to stand up and pedal standing up to get up the hill. The bicycles in those days were old one-speed heavy clunkers, with just one gear and big balloon tires.

Did you ever encounter any wildlife?

I don't ever recall any wildlife.

Do you remember if there was a concession stand?

Yes, I think there was a concession stand, but I don't remember what it sold. I remember that there was something that would draw our attention to where the bathhouse was, and that it was open on the north end and closed on the south end with cinderblock walls. It seemed to open up like a pavilion on the northern end, if I recall. I don't know what was going on in there. Maybe they were just checking clothes or giving you a basket to put your clothes in, or maybe they were selling something.

What is your favorite memory of Duncan Brook?

I used to love the diving board, and seeing how far you could swim underwater. I remember going off the diving board and seeing if I could swim underwater all the way down to the buoys at the end where the stream came in. There was a camaraderie among the kids that went up there. It was always nice, because your friends would all meet up there.

Why did it close?

I have no idea.

What did you do after it closed?

For swimming? I got a job at a summer camp then. So it was in junior high school, and during high school I got a job at a summer camp, so I was away all summer. I wasn't in town.

INTERVIEW #7: Thomas Callahan

When did you first go to Duncan brook?

It was a fresh pond, and the town turned it into a town swimming area, so it was really close. It was probably in existence from 1957 to 1961 or so. That's approximate. It started to go out of fashion during high school.

How far away was it from your home?

I lived down on the road coming back from the Dalton Nursing Home, so my brother and myself, with the other kids. It was probably a good four miles one way.

How often did you go?

Depending on my summer jobs, we would go up there pretty much every nice day.

Was the water cold?

Yeah, that was one of its drawbacks. It was fed by springs, and it was very cold. In fact, to alleviate that, the town put pipes at the bottom of it to draw the cold water and get the water circulating. It was a nice place, but kids at the time didn't think about that stuff. They built a little building. They built it for changing areas, there were lifeguards paid by the town for about two years. It was our own little community there. There were a lot of young kids there. They cleared out about to the shoreline to create the area. It was going for a while until the road, you know, it's easily washed out.

Did you ever work there?

No.

Did you ever encounter any wildlife?

Good question. It was a pretty wild area. Beyond the occasional fox, wild turkey, there probably wasn't any [unintelligible] up there. Wildlife might have been a little more prevalent then, but nobody thought much about it then.

Was there a concession stand there?

Yeah, they had a concession stand up there for a few years.

What is your favorite memory of Duncan Brook?

They had a real good diving board, and I don't know about it at the current time, but a lot of us were divers up there, like at Wahconah Falls. People didn't have the luxury of swimming pools, because back then pools weren't really invented. People, in my opinion, who swam were pretty strong swimmers. A lot of us had lifesaving licenses from the Community House. It wasn't unusual. Swimming was important, and most of us passed all those tests. I'd say the springboard the town put in was pretty good, and the place was kind of cool to go to.

What did you do after it closed? Where did you swim after that?

The early 60's, my era of high school, the theme for swimming changed. At about that time, a lot of us were out after high school. In the early 70's, they shut it down. The swimming area in Dalton kind of died with Duncan Brook. Some people still went in the 70's, but more people were getting swimming pools put on their properties. The Legion pond was closing down.

Do you have any other interesting facts or stories about Duncan Brook?

Well, it was pretty buggy up there. A bunch of us worked for the water department in high school. We cleaned around the reservoirs and the water filters, up on North Mountain, and also on the Beacon Reservoir. A lot of us were familiar with the lay of the land so to speak; a lot of young moms and dads didn't like bringing their kids up to Duncan Brook for reasons already mentioned: cold water, bad roads going up there. Nobody was driving SUVs on those days. It was rare to even have a jeep. People didn't like taking a nice car up that road and it was a pretty buggy area. But I would think if you asked anyone of my generation, we had overall very positive impressions of swimming in our youth, because what we had, we made the best of it. What we had was good to me. Nothing bad to say, really. Good exercise, too. A one-speed bike up to Duncan Brook every day. That was an added benefit.

Resources

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