

Pokings . . . By B.J. Bentley



We've often heard old timers tell of the "wonderful fishing" and the "wonderful sand bottom" and "the crystal clear water" they remembered from their visits to Lake Campbell "in the good old days."

An occasional item turns up to make one wonder just a bit about some of these tales. Possibly they might be classified better as "fisherman's tales" rather than historical facts.

The picture above, dating from about 1900, shows the low condition of the lake at that time. This picture was taken from near the resort swimming area at the south side of the lake, looking west.

In the distance, in the original photo at least, one can see the old, stone foundation barn, that is still standing just a bit north of the road leading west from the lake.

Also obvious, and surprisingly so, is the complete lack of trees along the west shore of the lake. The only trees visible are three or four immediately surrounding a house just south of the barn.

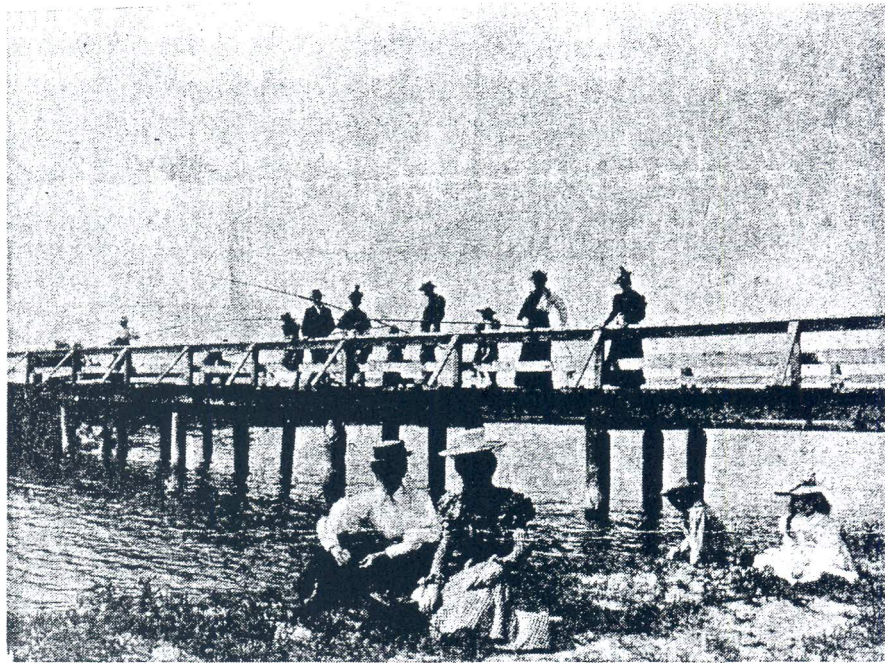
To cast rather strong doubts on the "fisherman's tales," we happened on this item from "The Register's" issue of July 24, 1913.

"Sportsmen May Improve Campbell," was the way the headline read.

The story itself went like this: "From mid-summer until fall the water falls until the lake is hardly better than a mudhole.

"Unless heavy rains come in the fall the water freezes at the low stage and most of the fish are killed.

"The plan is to put in a concrete dam at the north end of the lake which would keep two or three feet of needed water in the lake the entire summer and improve fishing."



This picture, presumably looking northwest, shows the old wooden bridge, probably, the first permanent structure over the inlet to Lake Campbell. Taken on the same day as the picture above, it plainly shows the abundance of beach brought on by low water.

From the outfits worn by both men and women one can surmise that this must have been a Sunday afternoon outing. And look at those fishing poles!

This crossing was replaced some years later by a steel structure, which in turn was demolished to make way for the present concrete and steel, safe but completely non-picturesque span.

Does anyone know when any, or each, of these three units were built?