

Crowder's Swimming Pool

I have vague pictures of me before moving to Capay, standing and looking at a huge monstrous swimming pool! This pool was about half the size of a football field I knew and located in the Sunset District of San Francisco close to the zoo. I was about three years old and Mom and Dad took us kids to visit some relatives who lived in San Francisco who took us to this huge pool. There must've been 2 or 3 hundred people there swimming in that pool plus a whole bunch of kids my size smaller and bigger playing in the kids' pool, which is where I was splashing most of the time. This monstrous pool is where my attention was and at all these big people doing pretty much the same kind of things that the kids were doing in the kids' pool. The intense blue color of the water intrigued me; that's where I wanted to be, in and around the big pool. So I kept heading toward it and being captured and taken back to the kiddie pool. But I was persistent and I once made it as far as the steps going into the shallow end of the big pool before being captured again. I've still fond memories of that huge pool, and when I got older, one day 15 or so years later I actually visited that pool again—funny how much smaller it seemed.

Moving to Capay, and meeting the one and only Cache Creek, it utterly became absorbed in my mind as the place to go swimming without question! But One day, I think around 1959 or 1960, my older sister Margo loaded me and second oldest sister Dawn--and I think Margo's boyfriend--and we took off to this place called Crowder's swimming pool in Madison. I was told Crowder's was a very old swimming pool, but I didn't really know what a *swimming pool* was other than another name for maybe a *swimming hole*—like the ones Cache Creek was filled with; cold and deep. When we arrived, there seemed to be a whole lot of people around this very blue pool of water that was a decent size and it did have a peculiar smell to it that was completely different from the smells of Cache Creek. It was very strange to me— Déjà vu?--because I was vaguely remembering this monstrous pool I had experienced some years earlier. This pool was different, but brought on this vague memory I had. Certainly very different from Cache Creek, so I didn't really know if I would like it.

By this time in my life I was what I considered an accomplished swimmer as I'd been swimming for two years. Well, I should say an accomplished "Dog Paddler," although I considered myself a swimmer!

Anyway, there were some good things about Crowder's—like the snack bar! One of the biggest problems I'd ever had swimming in Cache Creek was that I would swim so long I would be starving, but I sure didn't want to go home and eat. Crowder's had food right there—wow, go figure! There also seemed to be a lot of people; I mean a lot, not like the *crowd* of maybe 10 or 15 people at the popular old swimming hole on the northeast side of the Capay Bridge. Of course, some of those folks would be drinking beer and there was no beer at the Crowder's Swimming Pool--and no one throwing and skipping rocks or having mud fights or anything like that! Anyway, I was trying to figure out how

people were actually having *fun* there missing all the features I was familiar with--but they sure looked like they were having fun. The diving board was very new to me and was a whole lot of fun—though you had to wait in line, not like the boulders in Cache Creek where we just shoved each other in! I did like diving in and swimming under water from one side of the pool to the other and being able to see with my eyes open the whole way. That was fun! I was also very interested in the high dive, although when I tried to climb up and jump off of it the lifeguard would stop me; apparently, I was too young--which really ticked me off as I was used to jumping off the Capay bridge and this high dive looked like peanuts to me by comparison and I really wanted to try it. So, of course, I kept attempting to climb up and jump off the high dive by just trying to be faster or sneaking, but the lifeguard kept stopping me--and finally Margo got really mad at me because there were threats of kicking me out. So, I stopped trying to jump off the high dive—besides, after all, it wasn't the Capay Bridge; and I liked my sister enough to mind her--though I would have liked to have done some damage to that lifeguard!

For some reason, I spent a fair amount of time at Crowder's that summer. Eventually, Leaf Hanson, a family friend of ours, would go to the pool with us and decided to teach me the proper way to swim--which I resisted because I didn't see the need of it because after all I was an accomplished dog paddler. Anyway, I gave in and learn how to swim and realized I could go much faster which made me happy.

By the way the music being played loudly at Crowder's was dramatically and absolutely different from the music being played at Cache Creek on transistor radios! And I must tell you Hank Williams, Buck Owens, Johnny Cash, and Loretta Lynn beat the heck out of the bubblegum stuff being played at Crowder's! But never-the-less, I did have a bunch of fun at Crowder's and I'm very happy I was able to experience that grand ol' swimming pool before they closed and demolished it—what a tragedy!

You know, it is funny I always check out certain places to see how they changed by the time I would re-visit. I would always drive through Madison to see what changed and while doing so I would check out were Crowder's swimming pool was. Every time we would go to Winters for a football or basketball game I would always check out were the Crowder's swimming pool was! I guess I liked the place that much—go figger!