

We always rented the "Millie's Cottage" from old Pop Edson. The cottage was just opposite the ice house and just above Pop Edson's place. The ice house was a good place to cool off on a hot and humid summer afternoon.

Pop Edson was quite the character, his diet was mostly peanut butter and honey and everyone would watch when we would hear that he was going to the pond for his weekly "bath", which he took in his wool bathing suit complete with shoulder straps. Us kids also enjoyed riding in his old truck to the dump. I think it was a Reo.

At that time we would have to haul drinking water in a pail from a well down in the woods in back of the cottage. The water was always ice-cold and delicious. The kitchen had a pump next to the sink but the water was from the lake and used only for washing dishes. Pop's nephew Sonny used to come to the cottage and him and my dad would have a beer and then wrestle on the front lawn.

Against my mother's wishes, we would get as many boys as we could, using row boats we would sneak a peek at the girls in the Girl Scout camp (Bonny Brae) on the island. We'd also go to an abandoned house (I believe on the north side of the lake) that had a board walk from the lake through the woods to it.

Our days were spent jumping and diving off the raft that Pop Edson had built and anchored out in the pond in front of his cottages. When we weren't swimming, we'd catch blood suckers (leeches) put them on the dock and pour salt on them to watch them melt. I suppose today that would be prohibited as it is not politically correct. My Dad and I did a lot of fishing on the pond, catching bass and sunfish. In fact that's where I learned to fish.

Some times we would take the boat with the outboard motor to cross the lake and then hike to Halls store in Otis. Ole Ida and Leon Hall were great storekeepers and they had the most smelly homemade cheese for sale, but my dad liked it a lot. Mr. Hall would always point out the "Swamp swivel" he had mounted on the store wall. If I recall, it was a goat with deer antlers. At the time my brother and I believed him.

Well, just wanted to reminisce about Big Pond, it sure was a swell place to be when I was a kid.

I'm now 73 and have lived in California for 45 years, but I'll never forget Big Pond.

Ron Bastien, Huntington Beach, Ca.