

Caseville County Park

By William Diller

On October 27, 1919, a Notary Public signed a quit-claim document which turned over a parcel of land to Huron County. Payment for this property was one dollar.

The benefactors of this largess were James and Agnes Curran, and the Saginaw Bay Fish Company. W.H. Wallace, Jr., President, and Harvey Dutcher, Secretary, signed the document as representatives of the Saginaw Bay Fish Co.

That parcel of land became known as Wallace County Park, and later, the Caseville County Park.

The deed covered the land the park now occupies, but excluded a parcel which contained the Catholic Church. That church was located to the west of what is now the main park entrance and was moved later.

There were certain stipulations in the quit-claim deed, including a clause which stated the land was to be used as a public park and playground. It also constrained the county to spend at least \$500 for improvements within one year, and that the property be kept up as a public park and playground, or the property would return to the family.

The necessary improvements were made and Caseville had a county park. In the 1920's, a baseball diamond was constructed at the west end of the property. This baseball diamond proved to be a major attraction for the next 50-plus years.

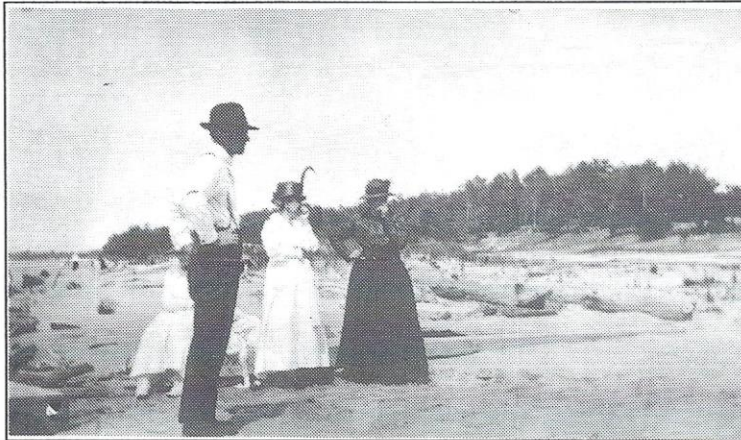
Organized adult baseball leagues, involving teams from surrounding villages, were a popular pastime in the 1930's and 1940's. And even as late as the mid-1950's adults continued to participate in the nation's number one sport on the Caseville County Park baseball diamond.



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Jim Cummings, Sylvia (Petterson) Bates, Margaret (Cummings) Bates

A local resident, Betty Guster, recalls there being some very talented ball players in Caseville over the years. Among the names referred to were Max Nicholl, Roy Dufty and George Jean. There were even rumors that the Detroit Tigers major league baseball team sent scouts to Caseville to watch our players perform.

The ballfield was



1920 - Dr. Tom Sage, Queenie Reeves, Aunt Mabel Barbour McCoy, Nellie Ziebold



used by the baseball and softball teams of Caseville School until a field was constructed at the school.

By the 1960's there were no more adult teams. The park was now used by Little League and Pony League teams. Later, all the organized teams moved their games to the ballfield on school property or the newly-constructed baseball diamond on village property on Clay Street. The only baseball played on the county park field were pickup games.

Baseball wasn't the only attraction at the Caseville County Park. For a few years, during the mid-1930's, the park contained a toboggan slide. This slide, located near the west side boundary of park property, was constructed entirely of wood. Wallace "Skip" Conners, Sr. was one of the people most responsible for the construction of the slide. Skip Conners, Sr., Les "Dilly" Fogle, and his brother Ken "Mutt" Fogle, among others, donated their time and effort in the upkeep of the slide.

In the days just prior to the public opening, a group of local boys crept through a fence and tried the slide out. In the process of sliding down the wooden incline, one of the boys, Steve Gillingham, received a very large, painful sliver in his posterior region. Because of the depth that the piece of wood penetrated Steve's flesh, professional help was required. The group helped young Gillingham over to Dr. Thompson's office on Main Street, where they were forced to reveal how the injury came about. As you can imagine, this was the source of considerable discussion over the next few days.

The slide provided a great deal of amusement for local residents. It was a large slide and in the winter a toboggan's ride would take one several hundred yards, from the top of the hill to about halfway to the beach.

In warmer months, local boys and girls would use cardboard to slide down. Some brave souls even used the slide without cardboard, taking their chances with slivers.

Interest in the toboggan slide waned after a few years when discussions arose concerning

a charge for using it. The slide was disassembled in the late 1930's.

The most popular part of the park now, as in the past, is the beach. Caseville is blessed with a wonderful beach area, and in the late 1940's a slide

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was constructed on the beach. This slide, not as large as the toboggan slide, was fabricated of metal. It was also disassembled after a few years when the water level of Saginaw Bay dropped.

The Caseville County Park has always been available for public use. In the mid-1950's the fledgling Caseville Rod and Gun club held a buffalo roast there. The purpose of the event was to raise money for the purchase of land to be used as a clubhouse. They sold sandwiches for \$1 apiece.

Camping facilities are another attraction of the Caseville County Park. In the early days all camping was done in tents. In the late 1940's some trailers were moved in, and in the 1980's the park underwent an extensive overhaul. This process took more than three years to complete, from 1984 through 1986.

As part of the renovation, the old trailers, some of which had been there since the 40's, were removed and the ball diamond was plowed under. The westernmost section of the park became a trailer park. The eastern side of the park, with the old trailers removed, became available for camping. Today camping in RV's and trailers is popular, although tent camping is still available. There is a playground, and facilities are available for picnicking.

During the early 1990's, booths were constructed at the park entrance and the entrance to the beach. Admission fees were collected. This turned out to be very unpopular, and the fees were discontinued the following year.

Improvements continue to be made to the Caseville County Park, and it remains a major attraction for local residents as well as tourists.

Dedicated to
**OUR PARENTS
ROY & CAROL
POISSON,
SKIP CONNERS
& JUNE BEDFORD
BY
COLLEEN & PAUL
POISSON**



The Beach at County Park, Caseville, Michigan- 1961.

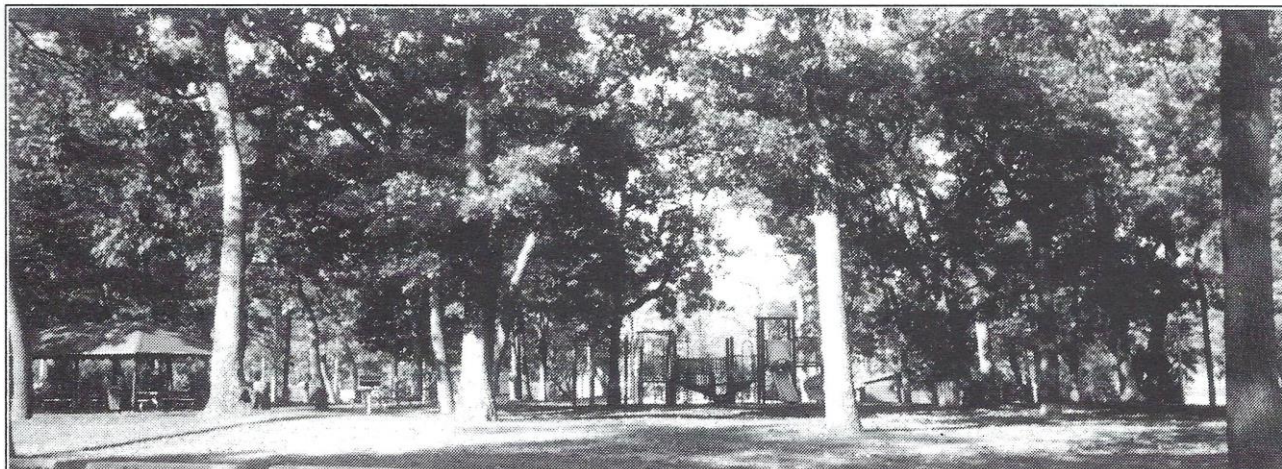
Beach Fest '93

AT RIGHT, More than 16 teams joined in the second annual Caseville Beach Volley ball Tournament...

BELOW, some of the two-dozen sailboats whose colorful sails brightened the beach during races.



Dedicated to **OUR CHILDREN PAUL MATTHEW & JESSIE K. BY PAUL & COLLEEN POISSON**



Caseville County Park, 1997