



Hopewell Quarry Swimming Club, Crusher Road (c. 1920s)

Rev. 9/7/2023 - D. Dixon

The Hopewell Quarry swimming club at 180 Crusher Road at the intersection with Pennington-Hopewell Road features a 40-some foot deep rock quarry lake. The site was originally developed as a quarry starting in the 1890s to generate crushed stone used for local roads. (See the companion brief on the Hopewell Stone Quarry.)

By the 1920s, the quarrying had ended and the pit had filled in with water, and was beginning to be used as a local swimming hole. In the 1940s, the Quarry Swimming Club was formally established with a separate swimming pool, and then was run under a series of owners and operators until the non-profit Friends of Hopewell Quarry in 2021.

<p>Informal Swimming Hole</p> <p><u>1920s - Swimming Hole</u> Informal use and swim meet 1928 - William S. Bond acquired from Amos C. Bond</p> <p><u>1935 - Swim Club - Montie Spurdle & Frank Zavitkowski</u> Lifeguards</p>	
<p>Formal Swimming Club</p> <p><u>1941 - Quarry Swim Club - Dezzie & Annie Bond Casey</u> Swimming pool, pump from quarry Refreshment stand, stone gatehouse, fencing Annual Water Carnivals with the Red Cross</p> <p><u>1970 - Forrest Lowe</u> \$2 / \$1.50 weekdays, \$3 / \$2 weekends & holidays</p> <p><u>1977 - Quarry Enterprises - Bill James</u> 11 am - 6 pm, seven days Memberships \$75, family \$50/adult & \$25/child</p> <p><u>1988 - Jim & Nancy Gypton</u> Daily \$5 weekdays, \$6 weekends Convert to membership only, ~400 members</p> <p><u>2021 - Friends of Hopewell Quarry</u> Non-profit</p>	

Quarry Swimming Club sign

Quarry diving - c. 1955

Contents

The Rock Quarry - Cope to Bond.....	3
Quarry Deed Consolidation.....	3
William S. Bond - Family Generations.....	4
Swimming Hole - 1920s.....	5
First Swim Club - Spurdle & Zavitkowski - 1935.....	6
Quarry Property and Buildings.....	7
Quarry Property	7
Quarry Buildings.....	8
Quarry Swimming Club - Dezzie and Annie Bond Casey - 1941-1969	9
Quarry Events - Caseys - 1940s-1960s	9
Quarry Improvements - Caseys - 1940s-1960s	10
Forrest Lowe - 1970-1976	11
Quarry For Sale - Bond Family - 1976	12
Bill James - 1977-1987	13
Quarry Reopening - James - 1977	13
Quarry Sale - James - 1988.....	15
James and Nancy Gypton - 1988-2020	16
Private Club - Gyptons - 2000s.....	18
Friends of Hopewell Quarry - 2021	20
References	21

The Rock Quarry - Cope to Bond

The story of the Hopewell Quarry starts around 1892 when Joshua S. Cope started operating his quarry business, on what is now Crusher Road just off Pennington-Hopewell Road (Route 654). Cope's quarry delivered large amounts of crushed stone (the local "trap rock") to build and improve the local roads. The papers include many mentions of contracts and payments from municipalities including Hopewell and Pennington boroughs and Mercer County.

In 1912, Cope retired and sold the quarry to Amos C. Bond, who continued to provide crushed stone for local roads through at least 1916. There is little record of Bond's quarry business after 1916, with comments that the quarry "was not in operation" in late 1916 and early 1917, but no suggestion that it was out of business. The quarry site continued to be referenced through 1920.

By 1922, however it is clear that the quarry pit had filled in, and was being used informally as a local swimming hole. In 1924, Bond filed a plan for the residential development of the Pennington-Hopewell Road side of the quarry property, but seems to have little success selling lots.

In 1928, Bond filed for bankruptcy. In December 1928, his quarry property was sold by the bankruptcy trustee to his brother, William S. Bond. [DB 643-570, 1928-12-29]

See the companion brief on the Hopewell Stone Quarry for more on macadam roads built from crushed stone, the Hopewell Quarry operation, the adjacent Railroad Quarry, and other local Hopewell Valley quarries.

Quarry Deed Consolidation

Over time, the quarry property has been split among multiple parcels and recombined, including multiple lots from the Colonial Heights development. This required significant work in rationalizing the deeds for the property.

After William S. Bond's death in 1936, the quarry property was passed to his six children. His heirs then organized the Quarry Swimming Club in 1942, which recorded transfers of portions of the quarry property from the executors of his estate in 1942 and 1956. [DB 844-476, 1942-10-09 and DB 1393-430, 1956-12-27]

The 1977 deed (when Bill James purchased the business from the Quarry Swim Club) combined seven different tracts along the Crusher Road site, including Colonial Heights lots 1-15, plus several other sections. [DB 2042-985, 1977-05-25]

In 1979, Quarry Enterprises (James) worked with the Hopewell Township Planning Board to consolidate and codify the quarry property, along with several municipal and neighbor easements, especially along the roadways. [DB 2113-449, 1979-09-11]

In a final clean-up of the deeds, in 1989 Quarry Enterprises obtained a court order that "fixed and settled" the title to the full quarry property, and stated that various other parties who had owned sections of the property no longer had any interest in the lands, including the former Quarry Swimming Club, Caseys, Bonds, and others. The resulting deed formalized the court order that confirmed the previous property boundaries. [DB 2491-986, 1989-06-23]

William S. Bond - Family Generations

William S. Bond (1859-1936) moved to Hopewell in 1908 from the Princeton area. He was listed as a farmer in the 1900 and 1910 U.S. Census. In 1934, on the occasion of his 75th birthday, he was described as "instrumental in developing the residential district in the western part of Hopewell" (particularly West Prospect Street). [TET 2/11/1934] Among other town roles, he was a director of the Hopewell Chocolate Company and a deacon of the Old School Baptist Church. [TET 1/20/1912, 9/18/1920]

After the 1936 deaths of both Bond and his wife, Julia Ann [Stout] Bond (1857-1936), the quarry property was passed from his estate to his six children. It was then owned and operated by two generations of the family lines of the six children, until the property was finally sold outside the family to William James in 1977.

William S. Bond's six children were D. Russell Bond [& Mary], William J. Bond [& Adele/Adella Z.], Clarence H. Bond [& Olive F. & Helen], Ethel M. Doyle [& George], Amos C. Bond [& Miriam R.], and Annie Casey [& Dezzie L.].

To Be 75 Tomorrow



William S. Bond

[TET 2/11/1934]

Note that William S. Bond's children confusingly included a different William J. Bond (1886-1953), and a different Amos C. Bond (1891-1948) who lived in Newtown, Bucks County, Pa.

The family members who later operated the Quarry Swimming Club before it was sold out of the family in 1977 were:

- 1942 - Dezzie Lee Casey (1899-1971) and wife Annie Elizabeth Bond (1899-1988), daughter of William S. Bond.
- 1970 - [Edwin] Forrest Lowe (1926-2002) and wife Lois Ann Casey (1928-2000), daughter of Annie Elizabeth [Bond] Casey and granddaughter of William S. Bond.

The family of William S. Bond continued to be reported as operating the facility. [TET 8/20/1961]

The property came down through the family of Amos C. Bond to his [brother], William [S.] Bond. As word spread about the swimming hole, locals began climbing the fences to swim. Eventually, the family charged admission, started hosting events, and, in 1928, incorporated the business [no record found of this]. William [S.] Bond died in 1936, leaving the business to his six children. Daughter Annie Bond and her husband Dezzie Casey managed the business for decades, and in 1970, son-in-law [of the Caseys] Forrest Lowe took over. In 1975, the family sold the property to William James, from whom the Gyptons bought it. [Comm News, 2/1/2018]

Swimming Hole - 1920s

It is not clear if Bond's quarry was even partially operational after 1916. But by 1922, the quarry pit had been filled in with water and was informally in use for swimming. One article warned of the danger of the "swimming pool at Bond's quarry," which was said to be 60 feet deep. [HH 8/2/1922] Yet another article in the same issue discussed an "aquatic meet which was staged by the Hopewell High 'Y' Club in the natural outdoor swimming pool at Bond's Quarry." The contests included 24- and 50-yard swims, and high dive (22 feet) and cliff dive (30 1/2 feet). [HH 8/2/1922, TET 8/12/1922]

—Everybody likes to encourage sports among the young people, especially the very young, but it is also well to caution them against danger. The subject in mind is the swimming pool at Bond's quarry. It is said to be about 60 feet deep, and if any of the swimmers should be taken with cramps while bathing it is a grave question whether or not they could be saved. The water is also said to be cold and conducive to cramps. It has been suggested that some sort of a safety device be placed in the water before there is a fatal accident.

[HH 8/2/1922]

Considerable interest has been aroused in the coming swimming meet to be held in Bond's quarry, Wednesday evening, August 9, at 7 o'clock. The event will include 25, 50 and 100-yard dashes, and a 1-4 mile race, with two classes, one for the H I Y members and another for the men of the town. Entry blanks will be posted at the quarry.

It is hoped that a large number of the townspeople will turn out and see these interesting events. Reserve this evening as it will be time well spent in showing your civic interest.

[HH 8/2/1922]

In 1932, a 19-year-old boy "miraculously missed death" after falling from a 60-foot cliff. "In a spirit of daring," he had decided to scale the steep cliffs while swimming at "an abandoned quarry near the Hopewell Valley Golf Club." He slipped and fell onto the sandy shore, and then into deep water. His friends swam out to him with a board, and carried him 50 yards to the opposite shore for a trip to the hospital. [TET 6/28/1932]

Youth Miraculously Misses Death As He Falls from Sixty-foot Cliff, Hits Sandy Beach, Slips Into Pond

That Albert Neely, 19 years old, of 619 Spruce Street, is alive today is a miracle. While climbing a steep cliff of an abandoned quarry near the Hopewell Valley Golf Club yesterday, he slipped and fell 60 feet, striking sandy shore and then slipping into deep water. He grazed a rock, jutting from the water near the edge of the quarry. At Mercer Hospital today physicians said that he had escaped with lacerations of the leg and arm. There were no internal injuries, which is considered most remarkable. Neely was swimming with other companions when, in a spirit of daring, he decided to scale the steep cliffs. His companions, watching him intently, were horrified to see him waver, slip and then plunge downward, turning completely over in his course. As he slipped into the water and shouted for help, it was seen that his left leg and arm were powerless.

[TET 6/28/1932]

The Quarry Swimming Club used 1928 as its start date (see sign), and various articles report that it was incorporated then, after locals started using the pool and the owner began to charge admission. However, besides some brief references, the papers are silent on any formal organization of the quarry until 1941. The 1928 date most likely relates to the purchase of the property by William S. Bond that year, after Amos C. Bond filed for bankruptcy.

Jack Koeppel describes the early days of the Quarry as a swimming hole:

My earliest memories came from listening to my mother who learned to swim there under the guidance of my grandfather in 1930. ... On those days when school is out and kids have time and adventure on their minds, no fence or wall or sign, can keep them away from a great swimming hole. As word spread locals began to climb over and around the rickety fence that surrounded the place. The local kids would walk; bicycle and hitch-hike to this beautiful spot to cool off and enjoy the water... [HVHS Newsletter, Summer 2007]



Quarry sign - 2010s [Kennedy]

First Swim Club - Spurdle & Zavitkowski - 1935

Bond family records report that 1935 was the first year of the Quarry as an organized swim club - as the Great Depression (1929-1939) was ending. It was operated by Montie Spurdle and Frank Zavitkowski. William S. Bond then died in 1936 and left the Quarry to his six children. [Lowe 1980s]

Another article reports instead that in 1936, "Dez" Casey decided to turn the Quarry into a swimming club that provided lessons, lifeguards, and an admission price. [HVN? 1977]

Montague Oliver Spurdle (1910-1990) lived in the area and worked as a manufacturing engineer, but has no further known connection to the Quarry. Frank Zavitkowski (1905-1999) was a physical education teacher and coach in the area and later was athletic director at the Hopewell Township Central High School, and also taught swimming. He was listed as lifeguard at The Quarry Swimming Club in 1941, and in the Koeppel quote below. [HH 6/11/1941]



Frank Zavitkovsky

[TET 6/5/1932]

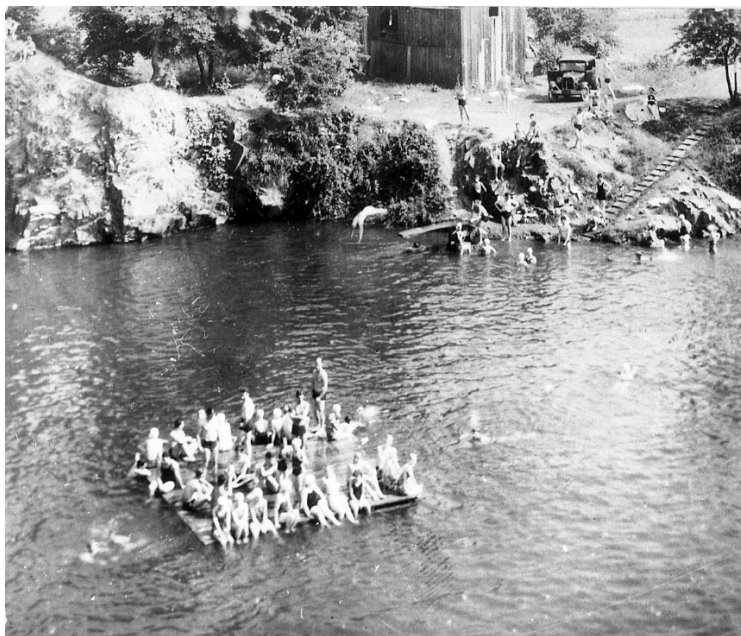
Jack Koeppel continues the story of the Quarry as a swimming club:

Ultimately the property owners hired Frank Zavitkowski, a local kid, to guard the place by keeping the swimmers safe. Not to keep people away as one might think. Later on my grandfather paid a small fee, as many local families must have, to help offset the cost of Frank's wages. Folks would come from far and wide to the best swim'in hole for miles.

The daring boys would climb a narrow path that wound along the cliff face to dive off Indian Head Rock, perched high above the water. The debris of the mining operation was still strewn about and it's said that the kids could dive down and sit on the edge of the little rail carts submerged below the surface of the water. [HVHS Newsletter, Summer 2007]

The Quarry Swimming Club have opened the quarry for the weekend. Pool 60'x30', 2 to 4½ feet deep, open soon. Frank Zavitkovsky, lifeguard. DEZZIE CASEY, manager.—

[Ad - HH 6/11/1941]



Quarry overlook - c. 1930s
[The Hopewell Museum]

- Model A car, c. 1928
- Building near pit entrance
- Rough entrance - long ladder
- Diving board, raft

Quarry Property and Buildings

The transition to an organized swimming club began in 1941 with new facilities including the 60 x 30 foot swimming pool. The 2023 site retains most of the elements of the original club, albeit with some upgrades and enhancements. The annotated plans below are based on the 2021 survey done for the Friends of Hopewell Quarry, with individual elements illustrated with photographs from the 2010s and 2020s.

Quarry Property

The 2023 Quarry property contains about 7 1/4 acres, with an approximately 9/10 of an acre lake, some 100 feet in diameter, and variously 30 to 40 feet deep, depending on the water level.

Hopewell Quarry Property
8/21/23
HopewellHistoryProject.org

Lake Entrance

Board 3

Old Board 4

Picnic Area

Picnic Area facing pool

Volleyball Court


2010s/20s photos courtesy Nancy B. Kennedy

Gate facing out to parking lot - Gatehouse & Kiosk


Gate facing in to pool - Gatehouse

Quarry Buildings


The current-day Quarry property contains structures that go back to early photos, including the guard hut, and others including the snack bar and office that have been reworked multiple times.




Guard Hut




Pavilion and Dressing Rooms (back)




Snack Bar



Old Restrooms



Storage Shed



Dressing Rooms

2010s/20s photos courtesy Nancy B. Kennedy

Quarry Swimming Club - Dezzie and Annie Bond Casey - 1941-1969

In 1941, as the U.S. entered World War II, the Bond family decided to formally organize the quarry as a business, and the "Quarry Swimming Club" was opened. A new concrete swimming pool was constructed separate from the quarry lake, 60 x 30 feet and 2 1/2 to around 5 feet deep, "supplied from ten million gallons of fresh warm spring water." In addition, "the old quarry adjacent to the pool will be available for deep diving." Lifeguards always would be on duty. Dezzie Casey was named as the manager, and Frank Zavitkovsky was the lifeguard. [HH 6/11/1941]



Dezzie & Annie Casey with kids - c1943
[Lowe Family]

The Quarry Swimming Club business name was filed in 1942. [NJ 7261301000, 8/11/1942]. (The shorter Quarry Swim Club name also has been used over time.) The date of 10/9/1942 was used in later deeds as the start of the Bond family's continuous possession of the quarry property. [DB 2042-985, 1977-05-25]

Dezzie Lee Casey (1899-1971), an employee of Public Service, was the director of the new club, working with his wife, Annie Elizabeth [Bond] Casey (1899-1988), daughter of William S. Bond, as assistant manager. [HH 1/11/1941, TET 8/20/1961]



[HH 6/11/1941]

Quarry Events - Caseys - 1940s-1960s

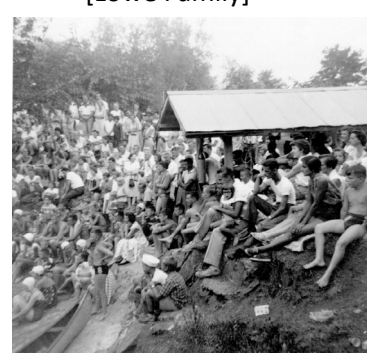
Newspaper articles from 1946, 1949 and 1951 reported that the Quarry Swim Club held spectacular Water Carnivals every summer in association with the American Red Cross. In addition to diving competitions off the cliffs that drew huge crowds, there were also demonstrations on water safety and boating. [HVHS Newsletter, Summer 2007]

The 1954 Quarry Swimming Club Annual Water Carnival, held in conjunction with the American Red Cross, featured a water show and classes in water safety, learn-to-swim, and rhythmic swimming. [HH 7/8/1954]

In 1961, Dezzie L. Casey continued as the director of the club. His wife, Annie Bond Casey, a teacher, was always present during swimming hours, from 10 am to dark, daily. The quarry had up to nine lifeguards employed on busy days, with a maximum capacity of about 1,000. [TET 8/20/1961]



Frozen Quarry - c. 1941
[Lowe Family]

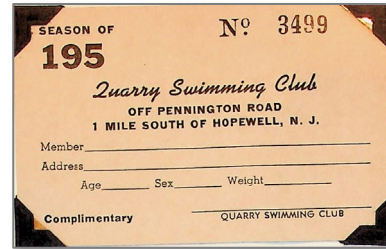


Water Carnival - 1963
[Lowe Family]

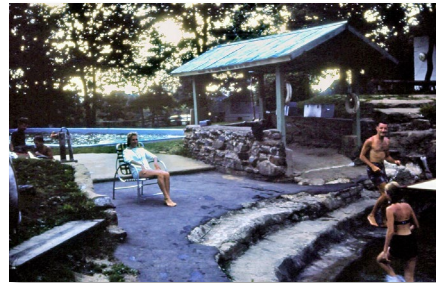
Quarry Improvements - Caseys - 1940s-1960s

The Bond family records report major improvements over the decades when the Caseys managed the swim club [Lowe 1988s]:

- 1941 - Swimming pool, Richard E. Reed, Hopewell, \$194.20
This was the first pool to be built in the area
- 1941 - Ford Fire Engine, Jack Lahiere Motor Sales, Princeton, \$80
Used to pump water from the Quarry to the pool
- 1946 - Pump House built by G. H. Piper of Princeton
\$45.40 for cinder blocks
- 1947 - Fencing around area, Harry E. Newman Jr., New Egypt
\$85 for posts and rails
- 1950 - Quarry Swimming Club sign
Painted by Norman Hoagland of Blawenburg for \$40,
repainted 1956 for \$50
- 1951 - Well water pump installed to pool area,
and to a couple houses on the hill
- 1956 - Black top around pool for \$214.
- 1957 - Refreshment stand rebuilt.
Original made of wood, looked like an old shack.
- 1957 - Stone admissions gatehouse built.
- c1957 - Filter house built by Dezzie Casey.
- 1958 - Blacktop installed to refreshment stand for \$142.50.
- 1960 - First year pool was painted, for \$173.46.
- 1960 - Fencing and barbed wire, Hopewell Fencing, \$417
- 1965 - Fence in back around whole property, Ace Metal Products, \$865. Too many people sneaking in.



1950s Quarry Membership Card
[Lowe Family]



Quarry Lifeguard Shed - 1960
[Rich Anderson]



Quarry overlook - c. 1942
[Lowe Family]

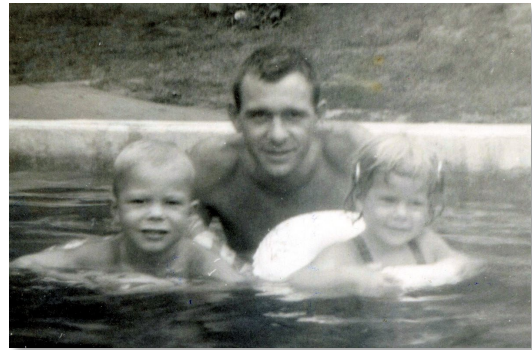


Quarry high diving - c. 1955
[Lowe Family]

Forrest Lowe - 1970-1976

In 1970, the Bond family named [Edwin] Forrest ("Forrie") Lowe (1926-2002) manager of the Quarry Swim Club, where he had been assistant manager since 1955. Dezzie Casey was in failing health, and died in 1971. [Lowe 1980s]

Lowe was married to Lois Ann Casey (1928-2000), daughter of Annie Elizabeth [Bond] Casey, and granddaughter of William S. Bond. As his day job, Lowe was assistant vice president of the Princeton Bank and Trust Company.



Forrest Lowe with kids - c1958 [Lowe Family]

In 1973, a cement and rock wall was built by the Quarry edge. [Lowe 1980s]

In August 1976, the Quarry Swim Club held a diving exhibition, including platform diving from heights of 6 to 30 feet with NCAA and clown divers, plus a finale with a 100 foot cliff dive off Indian Head Rock.

Fees then were \$2 on weekdays and \$3 on weekends. [Franklin News Record, 8/5/1976] August prices to Labor Day at 50% discount were \$25 for adults and \$10 for children. The Quarry was open 7 days a week from 11 am to 6 pm and still featured four diving boards, from 6 to 30 feet.



Quarry divers - 1973 [Ken Kaplowitz]

QUARRY SWIM CLUB

Rt. 518 & Crusher Road, Hopewell, N.J.
Across from Charlie's Brother

609-466-9887

"Just a short pace from everywhere"

SENSATIONAL DIVING EXHIBITION

Public Invited

If you couldn't get to Montreal, come to Hopewell and see our mini-Olympics Sunday, August 8, weather permitting (rain date: Sunday, Aug. 15).

PLATFORM DIVING

Heights of 6' to 30'
NCAA Divers and Clown Divers

You may even see a former Olympic diving champion

EXPENSIVE? NO!

If you come and swim, picnic, sunbathe and relax for the day, pay only the weekend admission of \$3. Children under 12, special price \$1, one day only.

SPECTACULAR FINALE

100' foot high Cliff Dive off
Indian Head Rock

Open to the Public: \$2. weekdays, \$3 weekends
Family and individual membership encouraged
1/2 Price - Now through Labor Day
\$25 - Adults, \$10 - Children

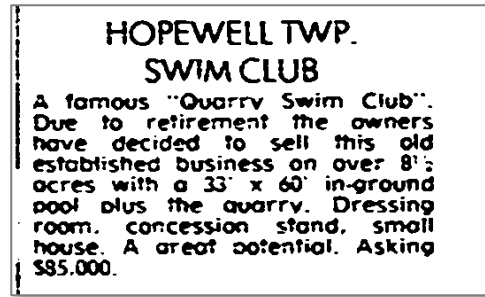
GROUPS - 25% Off

[Franklin News Record 8/5/1976]

Quarry For Sale - Bond Family - 1976

In spring 1976, the eight-acre Quarry Swim Club was offered for sale for \$85,000 by the Bond family who had operated it for the past 40 years: "Members of the family who have run the area's only public pool for the past 40 years say their children have grown and they have no longer have time to run it." [TET 4/21/1976]

Forrest Lowe reported that the quarry made "some profit," but suggested that it would be better if were run as a club instead of general admission. The main pool (lake) was described as about 100 feet in diameter and 30 feet deep, and the children's (swimming) pool as 30 by 60 feet. The daily fee was \$1.50 on weekdays and \$2 on weekends and holidays. [TET 4/21/1976]



[TET 5/21/1976]

When the quarry was sold in 1977, the Quarry Swim Club was represented on the deed by Miriam D. Thiel, President, and Annie E. Casey, Secretary. Both were granddaughters of William S. Bond.



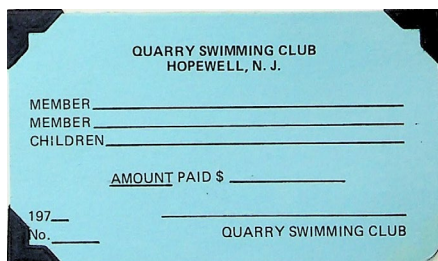
Quarry overlook - 1973 [Lowe Family]



Diving from rocks - 1970 [Lowe Family]



Jumping from rocks - 1975 [Lowe Family]



1976 Quarry Membership Card [Lowe Family]

Bill James - 1977-1987

In 1977, William (Bill) S. and Janet F. James purchased the quarry property from the Quarry Swim Club for \$40,000, under the business name of Quarry Enterprises. [DB 2042-985, 1977-05-25] The Quarry Enterprises, Inc. business name was filed in 1976. [NJ 0100021368, 7/1/1976]. James had leased and operated the business in 1976.



Janet & Bill James

Bill James was born in Trenton and raised in Morrisville, Pennsylvania. He remembers biking to the Quarry as a child and going there on dates. By 1977 he had "a number of different businesses running in Trenton," but when he read about the Quarry closing he got in touch with the Bond family and bought the business and property.

James then began a program of rebuilding and repairs, including the swimming pool, dressing rooms, pump house, and snack bar, and replaced the outhouses with concrete block bathrooms. [James 2023]



Quarry lake - 1976
Diving board, rafts, inner tubes [Devlin]



Restrooms [2018 Kennedy]

Quarry Reopening - James - 1977

James also immediately began advertising the reopening of the Quarry, with inexpensive family rates and daily rates, adult and kid rates, and lower rates at the end of the day. "[Forrest Lowe] helped me a lot. They came in as often as I needed them and showed me how to do things and talked about the way it was structured before I bought it." [James 2023]

In the spring of 1977, the Quarry Swimming Club offered pre-season single memberships at \$75 per person, or family memberships at \$50 per adult and \$25 per child. These provided unlimited access, 11 am to 6 pm, seven days a week. The club features were listed as "natural spring fed lake, diving boards, Olympic size children's pool, picnic groves, dressing rooms, lifeguards, refreshment stand, free parking." [Franklin News Record, 4/14/1977]

A 1977 flyer was addressed to "people who want to get back to nature." The quarry was open daily from 11 am to 6 pm. Daily rates were \$2 per person, or \$3 for weekends and holidays, with toddlers free and half price after 5 pm. [Lowe Family]

* OF NOTEWORTHY INTEREST – CONCERNING GENERAL QUARRY TOPOGRAPHY

- * Huge old shade trees, secluded acres of grassy picnic grove
- * Olympic size children's and non swimmers pool - attended - clear spring water
- * 4 spectacular diving boards — 6', 10', 15', 25'
- * Cool fresh spring fed lake in a 2 acre cliff shrouded setting
- * Cyclone fencing all around for safety of children
- * Charcoal cooking encouraged - picnic tables plentiful
- * Refreshment stand for hungry swimmers
- * Men's & Ladies dressing rooms
- * 2 very large parking lots
- * 3 big floats for sun and fun
- * Lifeguards in attendance - all are certified Senior Lifesaving graduates - many are Water Safety Instructors
- * Full time manager on premises 7 days a week
- * Secluded splendor in clean fresh air - unspoiled by progress
- * Swimming lessons available upon request

From 1977 Quarry Swimming Club flyer [Lowe Family]

James published a three-page Quarry Swimming Club Newsletter in June 1977. It reported that hamburgers had been added to the refreshment stand, and that swimming lessons were about to begin. The largest member group was the Heitzman family, with two adults and eight children as members, plus two younger children. [Lowe Family]

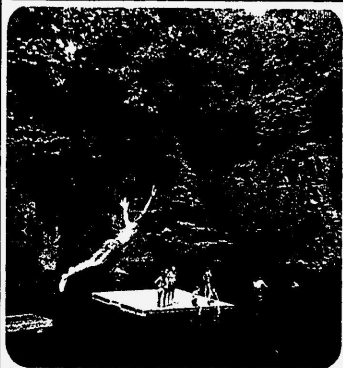
James also scheduled a diving exhibition. "I hired divers to come in, which I think Mr. Casey had done that before, which is maybe where I got the idea. We advertised it. We had people flocking out to see them. They were diving off the what we called Indian Head Rocks. It was really a spectacular show. They were good. They were professional divers."

People responded to the new activity. James reports that a typical day might have had 50 to 150 people, but "one of the high points, the biggest days we ever had, we had 1,000 people through the gates. I had lifeguards stationed everywhere."

On busy days, James said, "I used to stand out in the parking lot. It got so big that I stood out in the parking lot directing traffic. I opened up the lower lot too, and we filled that. We just filled it up completely on a busy day."

Busy days also required more staff. "We had at least one, if not two, guards on the pool, and at least one, if not two or three, guards on the Quarry. On a busy day, I had a guard stationed on the floats. We had people everywhere. We had to put a lifeguard stand out on the water, out by the cliffs, in order to be closer in case there was an incident."

James was at the Quarry full-time. "Every day, all day, and into the evening. In the first place, I loved to be there. And secondly, they needed me to be there because we were just running really heavy. And we had exposure to swimmers doing crazy stuff."



See
for
yourself
May 14 & 15*
Open House
at the
**Quarry
Swimming
Club**

*Rain Date: May 21 & 22

Route 518 & Crusher Road, Hopewell, N. J.
(across from Charley's Brother)

- ★ natural quarry swimming
- ★ 4 diving boards
- ★ 3 large floats
- ★ pool for young children
- ★ changing room facilities
- ★ refreshment stand
- ★ lawn area for sunning and picnicing
- ★ 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. 7 days a week
- ★ daily admission or
- ★ season membership available
- ★ May 28 to Labor Day

For further information and private party arrangements call Bill James

[Franklin News Record, 5/5/1977]

James adds, "One of my motives for buying the Quarry, in addition to it being a business, is that I had two growing sons, and I wanted to have a worthwhile project for them. So, I got them involved in the repair work. And also, they were both lifeguards there. We all took water safety instruction and ended up with both of them having full-time jobs here, all summer. So, that was a healthy environment to raise kids."



Quarry pool - 1976 [Devlin]



Quarry lake entrance - 1976 [Devlin]

Quarry Sale - James - 1988

In 1988, James sold the business to Nancy and James Gypton in a private transaction, so the business was never advertised for sale. "I sold everything out. I guess I learned... I was just making money. That was all I was doing, was businesses and money, and I just needed to get out of it. And so, I decided I was going to sell everything. I sold my house, my cars, all my businesses. Sold everything and bought a farm in New York State."

James concludes:

It was just a really great experience. The best part of it was that people just absolutely loved coming out there. We'd have families who would come when we opened at 10:00 in the morning, and they'd stay there the whole day, till 6:00, many, many days a week. And the families would come in and join, do a membership, and then have unlimited access to the Quarry the whole summer. So it was just a really fun place. It was a safe environment, which parents liked. They would drop their kids off in the morning and they'd go to work, and we'd be babysitters the whole day with their kids, but it felt safe to them, and we took good care of them.

And then, the summer camp, that was really attractive, because we had little kids come in for arts and crafts and they'd just stay the whole day. And some of my staff were very artistic people, very artsy-crafty, and they would teach them and work with them. And then we did swim lessons for quite a while, taught them how to swim. And I had moms say, "Well, I have to give my little girl swim lessons. She's afraid of the water." And I said, "Well, you can just give her to us and she won't be afraid of it after a while." Sure enough, a couple of weeks later, she was swimming away.

And we brought in a cart into the Quarry and set it on the path on the way to the snack bar. And I had a really beautiful young girl dipping ice cream, and that was great. And people just absolutely loved that, kind of the old touch of the way it used to be. Of course, the snack bar was really popular. I used to go down to Pennington Market and pick up fresh hamburger many days, and I would bring it back and cook it. It was always fresh and not frozen. And people used to love it.

James and Nancy Gypton - 1988-2020

In 1988, James C. (Jim) and Nancy J. Gypton acquired the quarry business and property as Quarry Enterprises from William S. James, with a mortgage of \$325,000. [MTG 2411-712, 1990-07-28]

Bill James knew the Gyptons and was looking to put the club up for sale. "Jim was working in corporate real estate at the time, and since he had the background, I thought Jim might be able to check out the facility and help me decide how to sell it. It turns out Jim had the perfect buyers in mind: himself and Nancy, who, at the time, worked in property management and was hoping to avoid an out-of-state transfer." [Community News, 6/2/2015]



Nancy & Jim Gypton
[Community News, 6/2/2015]

The Gyptons renovated the snack bar, changing room, and other buildings. They kept the original concrete walls, for the most part, but covered them in wood and replaced flat roofs with slanted ones, since they "wanted the club to look like it did in the '30s." [Community News, 6/2/2015]

The Gyptons also added the kiosk by the entrance gate, which was used to post notices, photos and articles from the season. The kiosk was previously the message board on the corner of Main and Delaware in front of the old post office in Pennington. Nancy Gypton reports: "I always thought it had character, and one day it disappeared and replaced by something more modern. I called the Township and tracked it down to a parking lot in town. They said I could make an offer to buy and come pick it up. They sold it to me for \$50 and we went to get it on a Sunday with two other friends and our pickup truck. We didn't realize how sturdy it was built and weighed a ton! We struggled to get it into our truck when a volunteer fireman came past and stopped to help since we were struggling. Took right into the Quarry entrance, dropped off and there it stayed." [Nancy Gypton 2023]

There were other safety considerations: "The 65-foot-high cliffs were once used for diving, but now, the most adventurous diving takes place from a 15-foot-high board. Cliff diving is now prohibited." [Central Jersey Home News, 7/15/1988]



Snack bar - 2015 [Kennedy]



Women's dressing room [2016 Kennedy]

The large lake at the quarry also proved its value on the evening of February 21, 1991 when a major fire occurred at the Van Doren Lumber Yard on Model Avenue in Hopewell.

Flames reportedly shot over 75 feet into the air, and some 29 local fire companies were eventually called in to control the blaze. The fire was still burning out of control after an hour and the town water supply was running low, so some 30 tankers were used to relay water from the Quarry and other sites to temporary tanks in the street. [TET 2/22/1991, 2/23/1991]

Jim Gypton reported that the fire companies "lined up trucks from here all the way into Hopewell" and pumped six inches of water from the quarry to put out the fire. [Comm. News 6/2/2015]

The Gyptons continued the theme of keeping the Quarry rustic and generally unchanged:

A freshwater spot considerably closer to home is the quaint Quarry Swimming Club in Hopewell, which opened in 1928 and hasn't changed much since, with acres of grass surrounding a huge rock quarry (with high diving from rocks) that is fed by fresh water from underground springs.

"I don't think there's any other rock quarry in New Jersey open to the public for swimming," said Nancy Gypton, who bought the property with her husband in 1988. "But it's not just a place where you pull off the side of the road and take a dip. You spend the day here. You have lifeguards, so you know it's safe, volleyball courts and a great snack bar."

Not to mention a huge supply of inner tubes for floating in.

The secret to the quarry's success is that it hasn't changed much while everything else has, Gypton said. Even the friendly catfish swim in the water generation after generation, keeping things clean on the bottom and playfully poking at underwater backsides that protrude through inner tubes.

"We call it the old swimming hole," said Gypton. "We try to keep it rustic. We don't modernize it. People come with their grandchildren to show them where they used to swim," she added.

"Aside from the trees looking taller and the place looking smaller - because they're so much bigger - it's still the same."

[Courier News, 7/7/1994]

In 1992, the Quarry Swim Club was open from Memorial Day through Labor Day, from 11 am to 6 pm daily. Fees were \$5 per day on weekdays, \$6 on weekends, with discounts for children and seasonal memberships. The facilities included "natural lake and non-swimmers pool; volleyball court." [Messenger Press ad, 9/19/1992]

The temperature of the lake water was not much different from that of the swimming pool. On May 25, 2019 the lake was 66° and the pool was 68°, and on July 29, 2020 the lake was 80° and the pool was 84°.

Arson suspected in 10-alarm blaze



Staff photo by Paul Savage
Firefighters battle a raging blaze at the J.C. Van Doren & Sons lumber yard in Hopewell Borough last night. No one was reported injured in the fire that is of suspicious origin.

1991 fire [TET 2/22/1991]



Kiosk by front entrance
[2018 Kennedy]

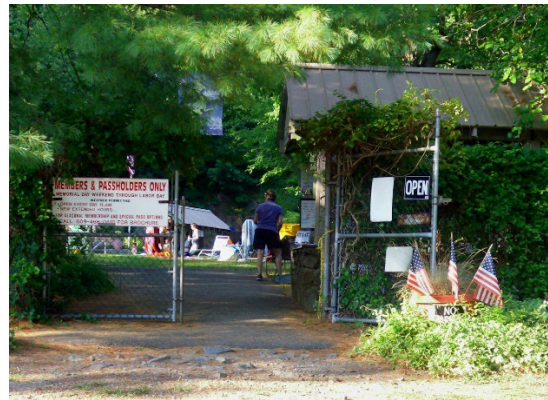
Private Club - Gyptons - 2000s

In 2001, the Gyptons found it necessary to close the Quarry to the public and make it into a private club, controlling access with a membership and pass system. Crowds and unruly patrons were creating an unsafe and unpleasant environment. Since then, the Quarry has offered swim lessons and camps, with season and half-season memberships, multiple-day single-owner passes, and guest passes. [Comm News, 2/1/2018, NJ.com, 8/1/2015]

In May 2010, the ABC soap opera, "One Life to Live," was filmed at Palmer Square in Princeton, a roadside in Pennington, and at the Quarry Swim Club. Danielle and Nate (actors Farah Fath and John-Paul Lavoiser) "revealed their affection to each other" at the "bucolic ... old swimhole." [Asbury Park Press, 6/27/2010]



[Daily Record, 6/27/2010]



Quarry entrance - 2011 [Kennedy]

In 2014, the Quarry was described as having a "definite rustic feel," with "three large floats anchored in the water and three diving boards. Picnic tables and grills are provided under shade trees in a three-acre grove for visitors who want to spend the day. There's also a snack bar and a sand volleyball court." [Town Topics, 7/2/2014]

Jim Gypton described the ambience of the place:

We don't advertise, people find us by word of mouth. This isn't a place for everybody, you won't find lounge chairs but we have grass, a pool for children, diving boards in the Quarry and inner tubes for relaxation. We have a growing number of very loyal people who spread the word and bring their neighbors as guests. I know most of them by sight, if not by name.

[Town Topics, 7/2/2014]

As of 2010, the Quarry Swim Club was open Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, seven days a week, from 11 am to 6 pm (midsummer to 7 pm). A full family pass for the season was \$850 and individuals \$335, and daily guest fees ranged from \$7 for age 5 and under to \$14 for 11 and up. The season family pass was \$900 in 2015, and \$830 in 2018 and 2019. [QuarrySwimClub.com, Internet Archive]

By 2014, the Gyptons were ready to retire, and were looking for a purchaser for the Quarry who could preserve it as a swim club.

The news is that James and Nancy Gypton, who purchased the Quarry in 1988, have decided to retire. Throughout their loyal stewardship of the nine-acre, iconic Mercer County property (known as "the old swimming hole" since 1928!), the couple have magnanimously shared their treasure with the public in the form of a swim club.

Now they're asking the public for help in finding a way to preserve this magical place, rather than see it sold to private developers.

The ecology in the 55-foot-deep lake includes catfish, sunfish (I know, I've been nibbled by them!), painted turtles, frogs and freshwater jellyfish. [Morristown Daily Record, 8/29/2014]

In 2019 after several years of talking publicly of wanting to sell the property, the Gyptons listed the 7.5-acre-property for sale with an asking price of \$950,000. The Quarry had about 400 members in 2018. [Comm News, 4/2/2019]

In 2016, residents organized a non-profit corporation, the Friends of Hopewell Quarry, to fend off the prospect of private development. The Friends engaged in more than five years of negotiations with the Gyptons before closing on the sale in August 2021. [MercerMe 8/23/21, 11/8/21]



By the pool - 2017 [Kennedy]

2020 was the last year that the Gyptons operated the Quarry Swim Club, keeping it open as an escape from the restrictions imposed due to COVID. Social distancing of six feet was observed on the property, at the gate, swimming pool, and quarry lake, and including the rafts, diving boards, picnic grounds, patio, parking lot, dressing rooms, shower, and volleyball court (except for family / household pods). Face coverings were required in the restrooms and dressing rooms, but not permitted while swimming.

As a result, the Quarry could not open the snack bar, although people could bring their own food. The Quarry also could not provide inner tubes, noodles, pool toys, or volleyballs, so people needed to bring their own flotation devices, toys, chairs, and towels. The result was a profusion of colors and shapes of swimming equipment. [QuarrySwimClub.com, Internet Archive]

In 2020 the Quarry was open daily from noon to 6 pm, and offered individual monthly passes for \$225 or 6-visit passes for \$115. (Plus lower rates for children and guests of members.)

By that time, Jim Gypton had served as a lifeguard at the club for many years, a role that he gave up when he was in his mid-70s:

It's been ... very interesting, fun, tiring at times. And we've enjoyed it. But I'm 83. How many more summers can I do this? It's like an icon. We have people that come there with their grandchildren, to show them where they swam when they were kids. There comes a time when it's time to move on, and we've reached that point. [Comm News, 4/2/2019]

Friends of Hopewell Quarry - 2021

The Quarry was purchased in August 2021 by the nonprofit Friends of Hopewell Quarry Inc. from Quarry Enterprises Inc. (the Gyptons) for \$600,000 with support from Green Acres funding. The Hopewell Township property was identified as block 18, lot 49, 180 Crusher Road, with a total area of 7.239 acres / 315,346 sq. ft. [DB 6450-1897, 2021-08-03]



Quarry pool [HopewellQuarry.org]

The Friends of Hopewell Quarry Inc. (FOHQ) was organized in 2016 to fend off private development. [Incorporated 7/1/2017] It was committed to buying “both the land and the swim club.” The organization said it was accepting donations and looking to obtain public funding for the purchase. “Our goal is to preserve the natural beauty of the quarry and to operate it as an accessible public swimming hole.” [Comm News, 2/1/2018, 4/2/2019]

As of August 2021 the Hopewell Quarry property is permanently preserved open space and was granted tax exempt under the Green Acres tax exemption program as of January 2022.

The Quarry is public land - a public park - regulated by Green Acres and owned/operated by the non-profit Friends of Hopewell Quarry in the public interest. [KVD]

In 2021, a monthly pass was \$225 for age 13 and older, or \$20 a day for 13 and up, or \$10 after 4 pm.

In 2023, the Hopewell Quarry offered day passes at \$21.75 for adults, \$16.75 for students 6-17, \$10.75 for youths age 3-5, and free for youths 2 and under. The weekend/holiday rate is \$5 more for adults and students. A late day pass (entry after 4 pm) is around half price. [HopewellQuarry.org]

Season passes were \$900 for families up to 6 people (including grandparents and nanny), \$690 for couples, \$425 for individuals 13 and up, \$265 for youths 6-12, and \$160 for youths 2 - 5 (under 2 are free). Half-season passes are half price.

Hopewell Quarry amenities include:

- Natural spring-fed 1 acre, 30 foot deep lake
- Inner tubes for relaxing, or swim to 3 large floats anchored in the lake
- 3 diving boards, 2, 5, and 12 foot heights
- Large swimming pool, sloping from 1.5 to 4 feet deep for non-swimmers
- 3 acre park setting, with picnic tables and grills set under shade trees
- Sand volleyball court and a variety of lawn games
- Red Cross Certified lifeguards at the pool and quarry at all times
- Private swim lessons for children up to 9 years old
- Special classes including yoga
- Snacks, drinks, and ice cream, plus weekend food trucks, or bring your own food

The Quarry also added off-season dawn-to-dusk access to the sand volleyball court and the picnic and park areas for active and passive recreation at no charge to the public.

References

This is one of a pair of briefs on the Hopewell Stone Quarry and on the Hopewell Quarry Swim Club.

Information extracted and summarized from sources including books, reports, maps, deeds, newspapers, and photos. Many of the original materials (i.e., documents, maps, aerials, photos) come from the many contributors to the Hopewell Valley History Project and are shared on the site (HopewellHistoryProject.org) - see the Acknowledgements page.

Comments, additions, and corrections are welcome.

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Lowe family historical information and images - Marcia Lowe & Julie Osborn

[Lowe 1980s] - Quarry timeline prepared by Marcia Lowe in the late 1980s from family information

Owners - Bill James, Nancy & Jim Gypton

Photo collections - Nancy Kennedy, Richard Anderson, Terry Devlin

Information and images - Sal Torre & American Legion Post 339

Geological information - Sandi Milburn

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The Hopewell Museum - 1930s image

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