

Oral History Interview
Ivan M. Fitzwater
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FITZWATER: [W]e kids had a swimming hole up northwest of Abilene on Mud Creek.

[Interruption]

FITZWATER: Well, now let's see, we were up at the swimming hole.

WICKMAN: We were talking about Abilene.

FITZWATER: About the swimming hole. That was quite a thing in the summertime there.

WICKMAN: Was that on Mud Creek?

FITZWATER: On Mud Creek. It seems to me it was up, oh, pretty well up there not too far from where the cemetery is, you know, that far up. And the creek was just right for we kids you know, for depth and all. And I went out there one Saturday and I spent the whole day putting up a springing board for we kids. And, the very next day I went out there and, before I got up to the swimming hole, I could see quite a bunch of people there, (not kids). And come to find out some fellow, I don't remember his name—he'd been drinking, it was brought out later—and he was going to show the boys how to make a dive. And he made a dive off of this spring board and he hit his head on the bottom of the pond and paralyzed him and he died within twenty-four hours. He was unconscious when I got there. And so I tore the spring board down, never used after that; spoiled it for us, you know. We kids never could dive off of it and no trouble at all, and this fellow, if he hadn't been drinking, he probably would have been all right. But that was pretty sad.

In the wintertime we kids did a lot of skating on Mud Creek. We'd skate, some of us, starting north out of town, go clear down to the Smoky Hill River, many times, without skates. And we'd build fires along the way,

occasionally you know, to thaw out our feet and so on. And oh, we had another swimming hole later when we were a little older, down on the Smoky Hill River.

That was west of the power plant, Brown's power plant they called it, it was a power plant or mill, anyway it was west of that not very far. It was across the road from a family by the name of Ross.