

# Photo of the Month

## Lake Atalanta



This circa 1950 photo of the Lake Atalanta area shows the south end of the lake with the swimming pool, small boat rental building, Lakeside Restaurant, and skating rink seen from back left to right. Courtesy of Lavonne Clark. (Negative #N013191)

In 1935 prominent Rogers businessman O.L. Gregory donated land a mile east of downtown Rogers to the City to build a lake named in honor of his wife Atalanta. In Greek mythology, Atalanta was a beautiful and swift-footed huntress.

Lake Atalanta was created in 1936 when the Works Project Administration (WPA) built a high, earthen dam across Prairie Creek. In 1937 the 40-acre lake was stocked with bass and bream and it became a destination for anglers. By 1949 the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission drained the lake and replaced the stock with more medium-sized fish, and a fishing pier was constructed from the eastern shore.

In the spring of 1948 a skating rink, originally operated by Mr. and Mrs. Ed Bautts, was added. By that July there was also a community swimming pool - then the most modern in Northwest Arkansas - and the Lakeside Restaurant, originally operated by J.D. "Cactus" and Lavonne Clark and later by Bruce and Jeanette Behne. By the 1950s the lake area had become not only a local recreational facility but also a tourist attraction and resort. Various watercraft were available, as was a miniature golf course. Atalanta Park included picnic tables, playground equipment, and tennis courts.

From 1957 through 1970 the lake served as the city's water supply until Beaver Lake became a water source. In the 1970s a stage was added near the old tennis courts, numerous native trees were planted, and the Game and Fish Commission introduced Amur carp to the lake to control vegetation.. In 1985 a pavilion was added to the south end of the park

In 1995 the Lakeside Pool and Activity Center was purchased by the City of Rogers and the Rogers Youth Center. The restaurant now serves private functions, weddings, parties, and receptions, and the skating rink is now the Daisy Special Events Center, thanks to sponsorship by the Daisy Manufacturing Company. Today the lake area serves as a family park, an exercise trail, a haven for ducks and other wildlife, and a host to several yearly city-wide events.

