

Flyer

WATCH

Inserts for Thursday, July 27, 2000

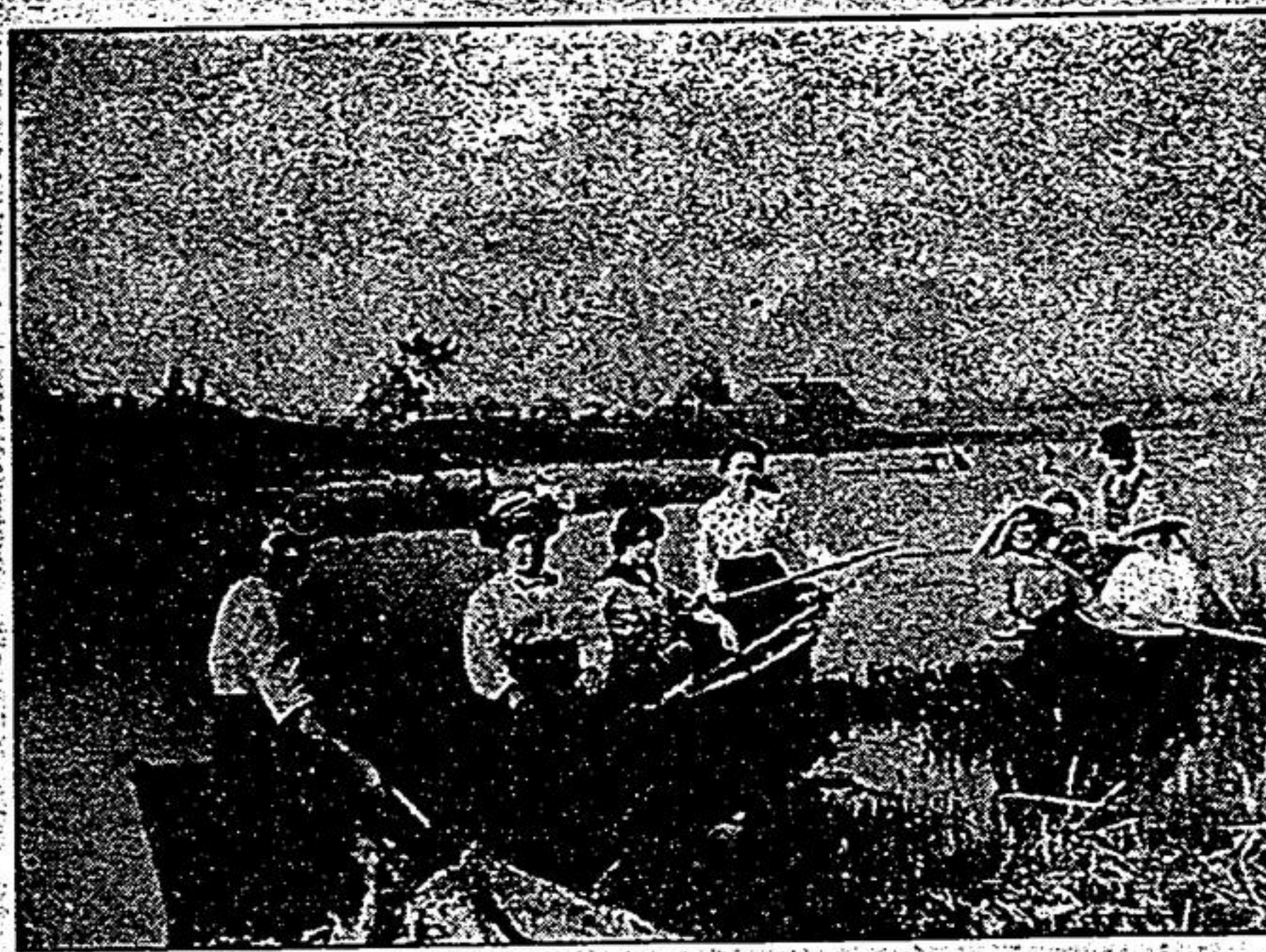
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MARKHAM ECONOMIST & SUN (905) 294-8244 Stouffville Tribune



Members of the Stiver family canoeing on Willow Lake on a Sunday morning in 1914. Willow Lake is now known as Toogood Pond, located in Unionville.

Drowning a low point in history of Toogood Pond

A landmark is a place of significance not only recognized by many, but also with its own meaning and history. Sitting on a park bench, watching people strolling along the pathways, feeding the ducks or lost within their favourite book, you realize Unionville's Toogood Pond is such a place.

If Toogood Pond could tell its own history, imagine the stories it would share. It would speak of its beginnings in 1840, when Ira White built a mill race and placed a wooden dam across Beaver Creek, forming what was known more than a century ago as Willow Lake.

The mill race powered White's grist mill named Union Mills, which became the economic centre of the small hamlet of Unionville. Willow Lake was a place where people spent their summers swimming, fishing and boating.

In the winter months, once the lake was frozen, you would find farmers cutting large chunks of ice to take home to their milk houses for summer refrigeration.

The Pond, as it was often referred to, would also tell of a tragedy that shocked the town of Markham. Ross Gribbett, a 17-year-old Markham High School student, drowned on June 16, 1949.

His death marked a turning point in the pond's history, as it was decided a place was needed for supervised swimming.

Arthur Toogood, who purchased the property in the late 1930s, agreed to provide the facilities for a swimming club and leased the property to the town for a \$1 a year.

The Unionville Swimming Club was formed in the early 1950s and was run by a junior executive with adult advisers. This youth-run swimming club managed to stay afloat until the early 1980s when the town purchased the pond and surrounding vacant lots from the Toogoods.

Eventually, the pond was named after the Toogood family in honour of its active community involvement.

Between 1981 and 1982, under the direction of the town, Toogood Pond would witness major renovations and an expansion of the existing dam.

A pedestrian bridge would replace the old cement dam and walkways and picnic areas would be created.

Sept. 18, 1982 marked the official opening of the "new" Toogood Pond. It would prove to be a favourite haunt for many in the community, a place with a rich and varied history.

This year the Markham Lions Club and the Markham Museum are encouraging the community to share their memories of Markham. By donating your photographs or negatives taken of Markham between 1930 and 1999, you will be helping us create a legacy for Markham's future generations.



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