

Summer 2008



Reminiscing about summers past brings up many happy memories – picnics, barbecues, the ice cream truck, parades, the beach, family vacations, and watermelon to name a few. Swimming, whether at a public or private pool, a lake, an ocean or the ol' swimmin' hole, is generally a fond summertime memory also.

This summer will be long remembered for swimming, especially with the Olympics of 2008 held in Beijing – all the gold medals won and the records broken. Wow! Competitive swimming has become such a popular sport now.

Thinking back, was swimming a sport at St. Viator College in Bourbonnais, IL? Looking through *The Viatorian*, the St. Viator College journal/newspaper, a few articles proved most interesting.

The first mention of the college having a swimming team, as well as, both tennis and golf teams, appeared in the Editorial section of the Christmas 1923 issue. Those three sports were considered minor sports then.

Viator has so many students interested in one or another form of athletics, as well as academic leagues and senior leagues, that there is little need to emphasize the individual's necessities in the way of exercise. But there are many students who are accomplished in branches of sport which do not get attention because the three major activities require such concentration. With a pool, we should have a swimming team this Spring. There are enough students on the tennis courts each day to form a nucleus for a tennis squad. Certainly few schools possess nine hole golf courses and such players as McGuirk, Dundon and others on the third corridor. These minor sports require but two or three men on each team and the expense is comparatively little, for each man has his own equipment and vast stadiums are not needed.

There are no minor sports at Viator now. If some courageous spirit will volunteer to organize each of the suggested teams they will soon spring into existence.

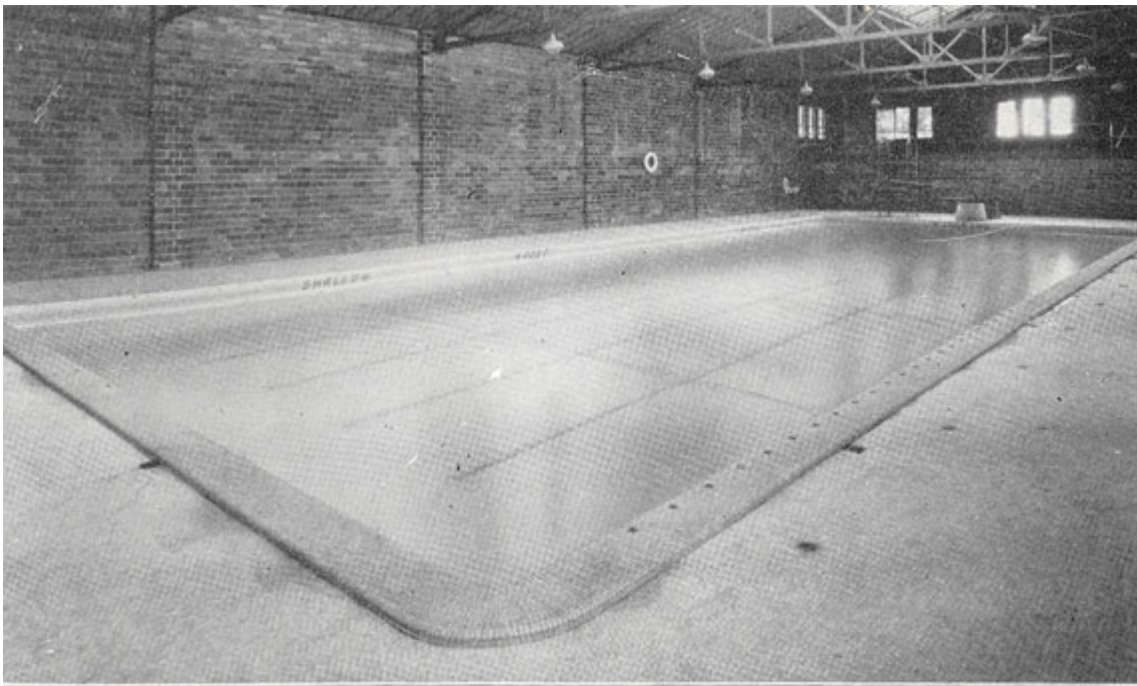
It didn't take long to spur interest in this sport. In the very next issue, January 1924, the photo and caption below was published, however, with no identification of the five team members or the coach. The coach looks like Fr. John W. Maguire, CSV (front row, center) who was the Vice-President of St. Viator College at the time. The others remain unidentified.

At last there is a coach for the prospective swimming team. Who are the five mighty swimmers besides the gentleman in the central foreground? What? Don't you know him?



2

The construction of a new gymnasium was begun immediately after the fire which destroyed the old one in January 1926. It now contained a modern swimming tank, which is 75 feet by 30 feet.



Swimming Pool—White Tile Tank 75 ft. by 30 ft.

3

By May 1927, the college had its first interclass swimming meet in the new tank. It was hoped that this would create more enthusiasm for the sport. How could it not with the 'fancy diving' and 'plunging for distance' events?

FIRST COLLEGE SWIMMING MEET TONIGHT AT 8:15

MANY AQUATIC EVENTS TO
BE INCLUDED IN
PROGRAM.

The scholastic year of 1926-1927 has seen the innovation of many new features into the curriculum of St. Viator College. A recent announcement brings another new event to the College. The first interclass swimming meet will be staged in the new tank in the gymnasium tonight after chapel. This particular event is limited to the College department only. A meet for the Academy will take place some time next week.

Mr. Paul Leary is manager of the event and has arranged an extensive set of contests. Teams representing classes will consist of four men for each class. The events will include fancy diving, plunging for distance, underwater swim for distance, twenty-five yard dash free style, two hundred yard relay, and other contests.

The entire student body is invited to attend this meet and it is hoped that more enthusiasm for the great aquatic sports will be created in the College department through this event.

The newspaper collection from St. Viator College spans from 1883-1938 and has many interesting stories of life on campus. They conjure up many thoughts, memories and emotions – at the very least it might make you smile because...times...they are a changin'!

Enjoy the rest of the summer, relax and reminisce!

References

- 1 The Viatorian. Bourbonnais, IL: St. Viator College, Vol. 41, No. 2, (Christmas 1923): 24
 - 2 The Viatorian. Bourbonnais, IL: St. Viator College, Vol. 41, No. 3, (January 1924): 24
 - 3 CSV Institutions. IL, Bourbonnais: St. Viator College, Photograph Collection - Buildings
 - 4 The Viatorian. Bourbonnais, IL: St. Viator College, Vol. 44, No. 14, (May 28, 1927): 3
- Swim logo from http://results.beijing2008.cn/WRM/ENG/Schedule/SW_2008-08-20.shtml