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A REFRESHER COURSE ON SOME PAST COOL SPOTS

Don Edwards, herald-Leader Columnist

Years ago, when a screened-in porch looked cooler than it does now, one way to beat the August heat in Lexington was to take a quick drive to the water.

There was Boonesborough Beach on the Kentucky River between Madison and Clark counties. And there was Herrington Lake in Boyle, Mercer and Garrard counties. Was it really much cooler in those spots? Well, it seemed cooler.

Both places had popular **restaurants**.

Downriver from Boonesborough in a log building was Johnny **Allman's**, famous for its catfish, beer cheese and fried banana peppers.

The place was always crowded and noisy with lots of jokes and stories being told.

At the lake, not far from Camp Kennedy Bridge, was Anna & Pierre's, with notable steaks, French-style cooking and a big lawn that sloped down to the water.

It was a quieter place with peacocks on the lawn and boats cruising past in the distance. It was in a "dry" county and didn't serve drinks, but brown bags would appear.

Both **restaurants** are gone now. Over the years, both had fires, both relocated in new buildings and both finally went out of business.

The river and the lake were quite different. The river was ancient. The lake had been made in 1925.

There was a great sense of history in being on the river near where Fort Boonesborough had once stood.

If you took a tour boat downriver between Boonesborough and Clays Ferry, you could pass Dragon Cave. Its entrance was high up in one of the palisades, as the river cliffs are called.

The lake didn't have as much history, but there was a time when it had an amusing mystery.

A University of Kentucky professor had reported seeing a strange creature in the lake, something along the lines of the Loch Ness monster.

Somebody nicknamed it "Herry" after the name of the lake.

But how could a giant serpent be in a lake made in the 1920s? Where would it have come from?

Some speculated that Herry, if it existed, had come out of an underground river from a cave that the 2,335-acre lake had covered.

This was a lot of fun to talk about, but after a summer or two, Herry was forgotten.

The river had no sea serpent, but it had a lot of old stories, including one about Daniel Boone swinging across part of the water on a grapevine to escape pursuing Indians.

A local joke was that he had "swung across the river to get a beer."

Boonesborough was - and is - "dry" on the Madison County side of the water.

But just across the river - in fact, right at the end of the bridge - in Clark County once stood a tavern named the Daniel Boone Inn (or "the DBI," its regulars called it).

A statue of Boone stood behind the tavern. Its nose was chipped off from rowdies taking shots at it.

The DBI vanished when the road was widened, and the statue was repaired and moved to a downtown park in Winchester.

The old August memories of dinner by the lake and river have moved pretty far away, too. But they aren't quite gone.

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